

**UPDATING FOR
THE HOLIDAYS**

Behind the scenes at Walt Disney World's Holiday Services.

CHILL OUT
WITH

ICE!



Volume 2, Issue 1
December 2008 / January 2009
www.attractionsmagazine.com

ORLANDO **Attractions** MAGAZINE

T-REX

stomps its way onto Downtown
Disney's restaurant scene.

A'LURE

SeaWorld's Sea Sirens
summon acrobatics
in a new show.



DISNEY'S AMBASSADORS
Representing the Mouse House is a
challenging and rewarding task.

ICY COLD HOT SPOT
Stay cool while the night heats
up at Orlando's new ice bar.

DISNEYANA MANIA
Collectors swarm to all kinds
of Disney merchandise.

Meet Yehaa Bob Jackson as he regularly entertains Orlando on the piano.

**EXTREME GO-KARTS TRACKS • SPECTACULAR THRILL RIDES
CLASSIC MIDWAY RIDES • HUGE VIDEO ARCADE!**

MAGICAL MIDWAY

THRILL PARK



**WE KNOW ALL THE TRICKS
WHEN IT COMES TO FUN!**

\$2.50 OFF ANY ARMBAND

VALID UP TO SIX PEOPLE
COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE.
NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFERS OR SPECIALS.
ONE COUPON PER TRANSACTION. SLINGSHOT
AND STARFLYER NOT INCLUDED.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (407) 370-5353 • WWW.MAGICALMIDWAY.COM
7001 INTERNATIONAL DR. • ORLANDO, FL • 2 BLOCKS S. OF WET 'N WILD**

the internet's first
Orlando-based
Disney podcast



news
reviews
contests
in-park audio
high-def video

download for free at
distantcreations.com/insidethemagic
or search on iTunes for “**Inside the Magic**”

Inside the Magic is not affiliated with The Walt Disney Co. or any of its subsidiaries.

FEATURES

- 18 Chill out in Orlando with ICE!**
- 22 21st Century Christmas**
How Disney keeps its holidays up-to-date.
- 24 A'Lure - The Call of the Ocean**
A photo feature.
- 28 Piano Man**
Bob Jackson thrills audiences with his piano-playing antics.
- 30 Disneyana**
Disney fans have nothing but options when starting a collection.
- 34 Behind the Scenes of the Walt Disney World Ambassador Program**
A 44-year tradition (started by Walt himself) offers fun – and a lot of work.
- 38 T-Rex**
An old and new dining experience.
- 42 Gaylord Palms Resort**
A large Florida-themed resort with relaxing hidden spaces.
- 48 A Taste of Winter Inside – No Matter the Forecast Outside**
ICEBAR Orlando officially opens.



Orlando Attractions Magazine Staff

Matt Roseboom Editor-in-Chief
Ricky Brigante Creative Director

Writers

Deborah Brauser, Ricky Brigante, Kimberly Button, Andy Guinigundo, Andrew Kiste, Mike Reilly, Matt Roseboom, Kevin Yee

Photographers

Deborah Brauser, Matt Roseboom, Kevin Yee

Art & Design

Ricky Brigante, John Green, Pat Lewis

Proofreading

Ruth Roseboom

Advertising Sales

Tara Marvin, Richard Merskin

Research

Michelle Moss

CONTACT INFORMATION

Orlando Attractions Magazine
PO Box 22526, Orlando, FL 32830-2526
Web: www.attractionsmagazine.com
Phone: 407.741.3200 Fax: 407.358.5073
E-mail: info@attractionsmagazine.com

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 Letters**
- 9 Vacation Planner**
- 10 Work in Progress**
- 14 Versus**
- 16 Photo Finds**
- 38 Restaurant Report**
- 42 Resort Report**
- 46 Bemusement Park**
- 47 Spot the Difference**
- 49 Out of the Loop**
- 50 Photo Stories**

Orlando Attractions Magazine is published in the U.S.A. six times annually by Dream Together Media LLC, PO Box 22526, Orlando, FL 32830-2526. The entire contents of this publication are Copyright ©2008 by Dream Together Media LLC. All Rights Reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of the publisher. Statements or opinions herein are those of the authors and advertisers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, Dream Together Media LLC, or the editors. Orlando Attractions Magazine is locally owned and operated and is not affiliated with any theme park or attraction company. Basic subscription rate is \$24.99 for six issues. Single issue price is \$4.99. Shipping is extra on single and international orders. All orders must be prepaid and are payable in U.S. funds only. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Orlando Attractions Magazine, att: subscriptions, PO Box 22526, Orlando, FL 32830-2526. SUBSCRIBER: If the postal service alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year.

Back issues available now.

If you missed any of these issues, don't worry!
They're available as back issues in our online store.

Each issue is just
\$4.99 +S&H

Find them all online at
attractionsmagazine.com

While you can find our back issues
online, the only way to make sure
you always get the latest issue is to

SUBSCRIBE
for only **\$24.99**



Vol. 1, Issue 2



Vol. 1, Issue 3



Vol. 1, Issue 4



Vol. 1, Issue 5



Vol. 1, Issue 5

ORLANDO
Attractions
MAGAZINE

Subscription Information:

Full Name

Street Address

City

State

ZIP

Telephone Number (required)

E-mail Address (recommended for confirmation)

Subscription

1 YEAR • 6 ISSUES

\$24.99

(To order outside the U.S.,
please visit our web site)

To subscribe, simply fill out
this form and mail it to:

Orlando Attractions Magazine

Attn: Subscriptions

PO Box 22526

Orlando, FL 32830-2526

OR

Fax it to 407.358.5073

OR

Visit us online at:

www.attractionsmagazine.com

Payment Type (check one):

☐ Check/Money Order

(Make payment out to *Orlando Attractions Magazine*)

☐ Credit Card

Credit Card Number

Exp. Date

Security Code

(3 or 4 digit code)

Letters



One Year Complete!

This issue marks the beginning of our second year of *Orlando Attractions Magazine*. It's hard to believe that it has been a year already, but in thinking back to how long ago our first cover story (Epcot's 25th anniversary) feels, a year does seem right. Nonetheless, we want to thank you, the reader, for continuing to pick up each issue. We publish this magazine not just because we love showcasing everything Orlando has to offer, but because we know you love to read about it. As a result of producing *Orlando Attractions Magazine*, we have attended more events and seen more exciting activities than ever before and we hope that we've been able to bring all of that excitement to you, whether you're a local to Orlando or living outside of the United States. Here's to another great year!

Ricky & Matt

Ricky Brigante and Matt Roseboom
Publishers and Orlando Fans

I just placed an order for the second, third and fourth issues. It would have been more but as I'm sure you know, the first is no longer available. I really enjoyed that you used readers' photos to compare then and now. It really does give the feeling of a fans magazine. The Vacation Planner is also great, outlining all the great things happening around the different parks makes it so much easier than searching out each and every site. But what I loved the most was the Take To The Skies article. My husband loves activities like this and I am already planning on taking him to SkyVenture!

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I finally have a reason to be excited to check the mail. If you ever want a fan to write an article, just let me know and I will write anything you want!

Amanda Rossman
Tigard, Ore.

You've already written what we love most, letters from our readers. We hope that all of our readers will take the time to send us a letter and a photo telling us about a great Orlando attraction or theme park experience they had, or just your thoughts on the latest happenings.

LINES AT T-REX



Even as the sun began to set on Pleasure Island (no pun intended!) at 6 p.m. the T-Rex queue was out to the parking lot!

Chris Carter
Doha, Qatar

Yes, you can expect some long lines at the new T-Rex restaurant at Downtown Disney for the near future. Check out our story and photos of T-Rex in this issue.

SOLD OUT?

I love the new magazine because it keeps me informed of my favorite vacation destination, especially since I no longer live in Florida.

But for those of us who missed your inaugural issue, is there any chance we can see a bigger version than what is currently online since it is sold out?

Keep up the good work and the great photos.

Jason Campbell
Greenwood, Ind.

There's been a constant demand for our first issue and we've been looking into ways to get a copy to those who missed it. If we figure out a way to provide it, we'll announce it on our Web site and in the magazine. So stay tuned.

ROCKIN'

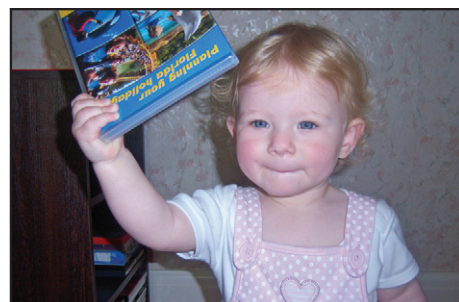


The 26th Annual Night of Joy (the first at Disney's Hollywood Studios) rocked!

Evan Henk
Punta Gorda, Fla.

Many Christian music stars came out for Disney's Night of Joy and Universal's Rock The Universe. Both took place the same weekend in early September. Thanks for sharing your photo!

YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG



"Mummy, I want to here!" Our 16-month-old daughter is already planning our next holiday to Florida.

Sara Smith
Scarborough, Great Britain

LETTER FROM A MOTORCYCLE RIDING CREATURE

I'm glad I made the trip to Katie's Candy Company at Universal CityWalk (to purchase the magazine). The picture of the motorcycle riding clown is me! Great issue. This year I'm in Creatures! Great stuff.

John Thomas "Shoe" Schumann
Apopka, Fla.

We're glad you picked up a copy of Volume 1, Issue 6 featuring your picture. We hope that everyone pictured in each issue gets a copy. Unfortunately pictures aren't allowed inside the haunted houses at Halloween Horror Nights, so you won't be appearing next year... unless you have a ready-to-scare picture of yourself you could send us.

KEEP 'EM COMING

I wanted to take a moment to thank you. I received my very first issue of *Orlando Attractions Magazine* and I could not be more pleased! I haven't enjoyed a magazine about theme parks since Disney Magazine!

THEN



Any kid growing up in the 1980s and early 1990s watched Nickelodeon game shows and other original programming on television, longing to compete in the Slopstake Course on *Double Dare* or simply get a face full of green slime. Until it closed in 2005, kids visiting Nickelodeon Studios at Universal Studios Orlando had the chance to experience what was once arguably the greatest children's television channel ever.

Nickelodeon Studios was not just a theme park attraction, but a full working television studio where classics like *Double Dare*, *Get the Picture*, *GUTS* and *Nick Arcade* were taped.

AND NOW...



Tours through Nick Studios allowed guests to step foot onto the famous game show sets and see how the shows were made.

Today, Nickelodeon Studios has been replaced by the Sharp Aquos Theater, home to the Blue Man Group show. Visitors to Orlando can still get a similar Nickelodeon experience at the local Nick Hotel, where no game shows are found, but there is plenty of green slime. Ironically, a new variation on *GUTS*, called *My Family's Got GUTS*, was recently taped for Nickelodeon in one of Universal Studios Orlando's sound stages. If only Nick Studios were still around...

SPACESHIP EARTH: A YEAR LATER

The new Spaceship Earth: Some people love it, some people hate it. I now love it. The people who hate it normally do so because the ending has been changed from what they grew up with, and they don't like that. I have grown to like it.

Spaceship Earth was becoming the *Sounds Dangerous* of Epcot. Classic enough that it should not be removed, but dated. It needed new life, and part of new life is change. Now before you say "but the ending didn't have to be changed so much," I will answer: Many will not ever notice the difference. Most will think it is great. More guests will consider Spaceship Earth cool and up to date. Today's kids will remember this ride, and feel sad when it finally changes. Epcot was meant to be updated, being a model of the newest technology and always having new things to experience. Yes, I miss [narrator] Jeremy Irons, but this new narration makes it an experience for kids and the whole family.

No longer is it that "boring ride in the dark with cavemen," but that "cool ride with my face in the end." And remember, above all this, Disney is a business. As much as you think it is there to make you happy, it is there to make money. And whatever gets people into the park and makes the majority happy and spend more money will be done.

I too originally did not like the new Spaceship Earth, but after riding it today, I realized there were many happy people riding it, no more kids wondering when it will end. The next time you ride, ride with a fresh memory. Don't think of how the old one was better, but how the new one makes people happy.

Kurt Nelson
Winter Garden, Fla.

We agree that a lot of what makes people not like change is their nostalgia for the

way it used to be. We think Disney did a good job keeping the favorite parts while adding new ones.

PIN TRADING FUN

After seeing letters to the editor about the pin coffee table in the recent magazine, I thought about a story on pin trading. My boys (17 and 13) and I have a bunch of pins (the three of us have vests with at least 80-plus pins on them) and love to trade with cast members on Disney property. Of course we like to try to get the many cast member-exclusive pins.

We enjoy it because the cast members make us feel like we have known them forever, and we have had great conversations with them and a great time.

My oldest son is more after unusual pins and my youngest is after monorail pins and his favorite, Stitch. I'm mostly after the Tinker Bells, and other cast member pins. Most of the time when we are in the

parks or hotels, my kids are hunting down cast members with lanyards.

Angela Ringland
Bradenton, Fla.

Pin trading is fun and addictive, and the nice cast members make it even more fun. Be sure to read the pin trading section of the Disneyana story in this issue. Look for a full story on pin trading in an upcoming issue.

WHERE'S MINE?

I think my issue of *Orlando Attractions* for October may have been lost because I have not received it yet. My son has been asking every day if it has arrived.

Honestly this magazine is the one thing that keeps us going through the months until we go back to Orlando every December. Could you send us a replacement?

Jeanette Karsen
Franklin Park, N.J.

We're sorry to hear your copy never arrived. We checked into it and determined

it must have been lost by the post office.

For all our subscribers, if your copy doesn't arrive by the end of the first month of the issue date, please let us know so we can look into it and get a replacement out to you if needed.

STARS IN THE PARKS

After the Tower of Terror 13K marathon, we stumbled across Joey Fatone in front of the Rock 'n' Roller Coaster.

I've attached a photo I took of him with my daughter Amanda. Feel free to post it on the Web site (or better yet, put it in *Orlando Attractions Magazine*).

Phil DeLuccia
White Plains, N.Y.

Your wish is our command. Thanks for sending this along. We have a regular feature on our Web site blog called Stars in the Parks where we run press released pictures of celebrities in the Orlando theme parks, but candid photos like this one are always better.



Send us your letters and photos!

Simply head to our web site at:
www.attractionsmagazine.com
or e-mail us at:
info@attractionsmagazine.com

Columbia
Sportswear Company

**MEET A MOTHER
WHO'S PROUD WHEN
YOU TRACK DIRT
INSIDE THE HOUSE.**

Outfit the entire family at the
new Columbia Sportswear Outlet.

ORLANDO PREMIUM OUTLETS
8200 VINELAND AVENUE SUITE 1765
ORLANDO, FL 32821
(407) 238-0631
OPEN MONDAY-SATURDAY 10:00AM TO 9:00PM
SUNDAY 10:00AM TO 7:00PM



Chairman GERT BOYLE

Vacation Planner

DECEMBER

1 - 30 Epcot holds a **Candlelight Processional** at the American Gardens Theatre at 5, 6:45 and 8:15 p.m. on select nights. Celebrity narrators appearing are:

1 - 3 - Neil Patrick Harris

4 - 6 - Brian Stokes Mitchell

7 - 9 - Virginia Madsen

10 - 12 - Marlee Matlin

13 - 15 - Monique Coleman

16 - 18 - Chita Rivera

19 - 21 - Abigail Breslin

22 - 24 - Steven Curtis Chapman

25 - 27 - Edward James Olmos

28 - 30 - Angela Bassett and Courtney Vance

1 - 30 Shamu Stadium at SeaWorld illuminates with bright lights and glowing candles as Shamu splashes to celebrate the holiday season during **Shamu Christmas ... Miracles**.

1 - 31 **Now Snowing** in Celebration, Fla. features strolling Charles Dickens Carolers, photos with Santa, the Celebration Express, horse drawn carriage rides and nightly snowfall at 6, 7, 8 and 9 p.m.

Through Jan. 4 SeaWorld allows guests to ride **The Polar Express**.



Through Jan. 4 The **Osborne Family Spectacle of Dancing Lights** lights nightly at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

Through Jan. 4 Mickey's **Jingle Jungle Parade** performs daily at Disney's Animal Kingdom.

Through Jan. 2 **Light Up UCF** offers ice skating, a holiday films, concerts, and more at the University of Central Florida.

The **16th Annual Festival of Lights** takes place at Silver Springs on **Dec. 5 and 6, 12 through 24, and 26 and 27**. The event is from dusk to 8:30 p.m. and features more

than a million lights throughout the park, plus dozens of neon displays, local choirs, strolling carolers, musical stage shows, lighted boat parade, a holiday buffet and of course, Santa Claus.

Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party takes place at the Magic Kingdom on the following dates: **Dec. 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 19**.

5, 6, and 7 The **Traveling Vietnam Wall** can be seen at Silver Springs.

6 **Diamond Rio** performs as part of the Festival of Lights Concert at Silver Springs.

6 **Mannheim Steamroller** performs a concert of their world-renowned holiday music at Universal Studios theme park at 6 and 8 p.m.

Dec. 6 - Jan. 1 Universal Studios presents **Macy's Holiday Parade** at dusk followed by a tree lighting ceremony with music. Other holiday happenings include a KidZone Holiday Show, Barney's Christmas Show and Blues Brothers Christmas Show.

Dec. 6 - Jan. 1 The Seuss Landing area of Islands of Adventure is once again transformed into the wintry wonderland of **Grinchmas** featuring a live musical performance of *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*. Guests are also able to meet the Grinch.

11, 12, 14, and 15 **Wheel of Fortune** tapes four weeks of television episodes at SeaWorld.

13 The **Temptations Review** featuring Dennis Edwards performs as part of the Festival of Lights Concert at Silver Springs.

20 **Ronnie Milsap** performs as part of the Festival of Lights Concert at Silver Springs.

26-31 Universal Studios presents **Universal 360-A Cinesphere Spectacular** at the end of each day.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Dec. 31 A special version of "IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth" is presented at 7:40 p.m. and 11:50 p.m. at Epcot. The park's operating hours are 8 a.m. to 1 a.m.

Dec. 31 Disney's Hollywood Studios hosts

"Fantasmic!" at 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. Revelers can "rock on" with live performances by in-park band "Mulch, Sweat and Shears," plus a disc jockey spins tunes at Mickey's Sorcerer's Hat. A special "**Lights, Camera, Happy New Year**" fireworks show brings in the new year at 11:50 p.m. The park remains open from 9 a.m. until midnight.



Dec. 31 **Disney's Magic Kingdom** is aglow with "Mickey's Once Upon a Christmastime Parade" at noon and 3 p.m., followed by the "SpectroMagic" parade at 7 and 10:30 p.m. "Holiday Wishes" fireworks takes place at 8:30 p.m., capped with the grand finale "Fantasy in the Sky" fireworks at 11:50 p.m. The theme park remains open from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m.

Dec. 31 Universal CityWalk's **New Year's Eve Party** features live performances by national acts, an expansive gourmet buffet, a champagne toast and live entertainment at its nightclubs.

Dec. 31 A **family-friendly free New Year's Eve Bash** is held in Celebration Town Center. The day includes live music, bounce houses and interactive games for kids, horse drawn carriage rides, 'snowfall' at 6, 7, 8 and 9 p.m. and a final snowfall at midnight during the fireworks.

Dec. 31 SeaWorld rings in the new year with a **musical celebration and fireworks**.

JANUARY

10 and 11 The 15th Annual **Ford & Mustang Roundup** will be held at Silver Springs.

17 **Loretta Lynn** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

24 .38 Special will be in concert at Silver Springs.

31 **Collin Raye and Restless Heart** will be in concert at Silver Springs.

Work in Progress ?

Manta Surfaces

LOCATION:
SEAWORLD

■ STATUS:
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION



While the Manta roller coaster at SeaWorld isn't set to open until summer 2009, **construction moves along steadily as the ride's track has topped off at its highest point of 140 feet above ground.** Around the track, various buildings and other structures have begun to be constructed as well, forming the exhibit and loading areas.

Fun Spot Jr.

LOCATION:
OSCEOLA SQUARE MALL

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE



In addition to their locations on U.S. 192 and off International Drive, **Fun Spot recently opened a Fun Spot Jr. in the Osceola Square Mall in Kissimmee.** Fun Spot Jr. features a large indoor inflatable playground, pool tables, an arcade and a dining area for birthday parties.

Duel Settled?

LOCATION: ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE

■ STATUS:
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION



As we draw closer and closer to the opening of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter (though still years away), more and more casualties can be found within Islands of Adventure. Last issue, we showed you the demolition of the Enchanted Oak Tavern to make way for something Harry Potter. Now, **the iconic red and blue dragons that formed the entrance of the intense Dueling Dragons roller coaster have been removed.** The ride remains open but the entrance has been moved back by the Jurassic Park area. There are certainly plenty of dragons to be found in the Harry Potter books and films, but there are no guarantees that the coaster will remain dragon-themed in the future.

Rockin' Around

LOCATION:
UNIVERSAL STUDIOS / CITYWALK

■ STATUS:
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION



Construction continues on the new Hollywood Rip, Ride, Rockit roller coaster throughout Universal Studios. It appears the coaster will take over the area formerly used as a concert area for Mardi Gras. There's no word as to where the concerts will be moved. By following the construction walls you can also see the coaster will take riders just beyond the park into CityWalk alongside the Blue Man Group entrance.

Animatronic Obama on the Way

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

■ STATUS:
IN THE WORKS



The classic Hall of Presidents attraction in Liberty Square at the Magic Kingdom is closed for refurbishment. On Independence Day next year, it will reopen featuring a new Audio-Animatronic version of newly elected United States President Barack Obama (pictured here campaigning in Orlando with former opponent Hillary Clinton). In addition to Obama, Disney's Imagineers are also working on giving the United States' first president, George Washington, a speech, as well as improving the lighting, sound, and pacing of the overall show.

A Little Pixie Dust

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE



Tinker Bell fans of all ages are now welcomed to chat and get their picture with Tink and her four fairy friends from the new Tinker Bell movie. Guests step into Pixie Hollow at the Magic Kingdom, shrinking to the size of a fairy, and immersing themselves in the world of Tink and the gang.

The Bears Are Back

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE

While the Country Bear Jamboree at the Magic Kingdom is once again not putting on its holiday show this year, they have returned from an extensive refurbishment that included an overhaul of the audio system found inside the attraction. That means that you'll be able to hear Big Al holler his rendition of "Blood on the Saddle" better than ever.



Health Conscious

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE

LOCATION: EPCOT CAST PARKING

The new Center for Living Well, an on-site health and wellness center for eligible Disney cast members and their families recently held its grand opening.



Goodbye, Partner

■ STATUS:
CANCELED

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM



The day Pleasure Island's nightclubs closed, two shows also had their last run at the Magic Kingdom: Woody's Cowboy Camp and the Main Street Family Fun Day Parade. Woody's Cowboy Camp was performed daily in Frontierland and the parade was, of course, on Main Street. Both were part of The Year of a Million Dreams promotion, which ends this year. The Main Street Philharmonic, which was a part of the Family Fun Day Parade will continue to perform daily and be featured in the flag retreat. Look for a new parade to appear on or near Main Street next year as part of the Celebrations promotion.

Work in Progress ?

Right Here, Right Now!

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE

LOCATION: DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS



Fans of Disney's insanely popular High School Musical movie series need not worry about missing their favorite tunes while at Disney's Hollywood Studios as **the third incarnation of the High School Musical street party has arrived**, officially known under the lengthy title "High School Musical 3: Senior Year, Right Here, Right Now!" or HSM3:SYRHRN for short.

Culture Coming

■ STATUS:
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION

LOCATION:
DOWNTOWN DISNEY



Following September's closing of the six clubs at Disney's Pleasure Island, **construction has begun with the creation of a new multi-concept restaurant from E-Brands Restaurants**. The new location will offer Central and South American food from a variety of cultures within its 5,000-square-feet of space spanning two stories.

Stardom on a Smaller Scale

■ STATUS:
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

LOCATION: DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS



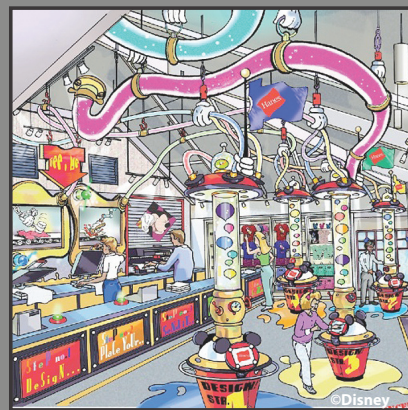
When Disney initially presented the world with its concept art for the American Idol Experience at Disney's Hollywood Studios, the plans were for a grand transformation of the former ABC Theater. Now, Disney has scaled back those plans a bit (new concept art above), at least on the outside, in favor of a more subtle change. **New simple signs and a grounded video screen have been placed outside the building while the name, "Superstar Television Theater" has now been given to the building** as an homage to the attraction that was formerly housed there many years ago.



Hanes Your Way

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN DISNEY

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE

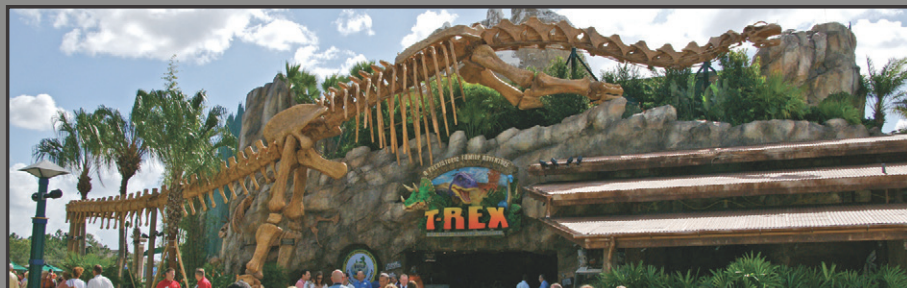


Disney's Wonderful World of Memories store at Downtown Disney is now, well, just a memory. **Disney, in partnership with Hanes, brings guests the opportunity to design and customize their own official Disney shirt** featuring some of the world's most popular characters in a new store that is replacing Wonderful World of Memories.

Extinct No More

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN DISNEY

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE



T-Rex, a new restaurant in Downtown Disney, has opened to the public. With 30,000 square feet of space filled with animatronic dinosaurs, an ice cave, a kitchen of fire, regular meteor showers and food, T-Rex has become a new hot spot at Walt Disney World. For a complete restaurant report on T-Rex, turn to page 38 of this issue.

No More Rides?!

LOCATION: CYPRESS GARDENS

■ STATUS:
CLOSED, FOR NOW

Cypress Gardens is closed until March 2009 and will return without any of its rides or animals. It will reopen with an expanded water park and a focus on the original botanical gardens. A new parking lot and entrance will allow for easier, quicker access to both areas. Financial concern was cited as the cause for the drastic changes.



Whopper of a Bar

LOCATION: UNIVERSAL CITYWALK

■ STATUS:
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Burger King plans to introduce the world's first Whopper Bar at Universal CityWalk in Spring 2009. The new concept is a condensed and more contemporary version of the typical Burger King restaurant. It will be located near the main entrance on the second floor adjacent to the theatre. The Whopper Bar will be the first of several such sites in the U.S. It will feature a Whopper topper area to encourage customers to customize their orders. The menu will focus on the Whopper sandwich and offer special renditions such as the Angry Whopper, the Western Whopper and the Ultimate Double Whopper.



For more
“Work in Progress”
visit the

ORLANDO
Attractions
MAGAZINE

web site @

attractionsmagazine.com

Videos



Photos



and the latest **news** and
information at the

Attractions
Blog

attractionsmagazine.com/blog

CURRENT MATCH-UP

SNOWY WINTER vs. ORLANDO WINTER



SNOW

Snow angels are fun to make ... for a few seconds.



WINNER: Disney's Winter Summerland lets you play mini-golf in the "snow".



CHARACTERS

A snowy meet and greet with Big Boy is mildly entertaining.



WINNER: Theme park characters are even more fun around the holidays.



RIDES

Sled rides are kind of like a mini-roller coaster in your backyard, only not quite as exciting and definitely not as long.



WINNER: Real roller coasters, like Disney's Expedition Everest, are thrilling and chilling in Orlando's 60- to 70- degree winter weather.



PROJECTILES

TOSS-UP: Snowballs: The original interactive shooting attraction. No points are awarded, but there's plenty of ammunition to go around.



TOSS-UP: From shooting galleries to dark rides, Orlando offers indoor and outdoor safe fun with virtual projectiles.



0 TANNENBAUM

WINNER: Nothing compares to a real, live snow-covered Christmas tree found out in the open, untouched and unbothered.



Orlando is filled with fake Christmas trees, that are pretty, but not as magical. Their lights look great at night, but the "pipe cleaner" branches just aren't the same.

Orlando's Favorite Candies
from

ORLANDO CANDYMAN

Delivering Quality Candy for Over 20 Years!



We supply to:

- Birthday Parties
- Family Picnics
- Hotels & Businesses
- Individuals
- Gift Shops
- Shopping Malls
- Amusement Parks
- Theme Parks
- And Much More...



Inquire about our retail sales opportunities.

To place an order or for more information,
Call 407-404-0048

Visit us online at www.orlandocandyman.com

Photo Finds

Orlando is always filled with fun things to see and our photographers are there to capture it all.

Visit our Web site for videos and photos from many of these events.



The first Mouse Guest Experience fan gathering meet was held from Oct. 25 to 30 at Walt Disney World. Mouse Guest is a fan-based Web site and podcast. *Orlando Attractions Magazine* sponsored one of their meets at the Dinosaur ride in Disney's Animal Kingdom. Everyone was told to make crazy faces for the on-ride photo and the craziest was to be featured here. Richard from the U.K. (highlighted above) was the winner. Great pose, Richard!



Fran Brill, principal puppeteer of Prairie Dawn and Zoe from Sesame Street made a special appearance on Nov. 9 at the Orange County Regional History Center. Brill gave a talk about her career with Jim Henson and her work on the show. Her appearance is a precursor to Jim Henson's Fantastic World exhibit, which is coming to the History Center from Feb. 6 to May 3, 2009.



Bolt and Mittens from the new Disney film Bolt are now meeting with park guests at Disney's Hollywood Studios. **Lightning McQueen and Mater from the Disney/Pixar movie Cars** also gained a permanent location for meeting their fans at the new Luigi's Casa Della Tires set in the same park.



As part of Spooky Empire's Ultimate Horror Weekend Oct. 17 to 19, a Zombie Walk was held on part of International Drive. Horror fans could show up all ready to limp or make-up artists there would zombify you. More than 100 zombies dragged their bodies down the street, including Zombie Indiana Jones, Zombie Where's Waldo, Zombie Elvis and many more.



The inaugural Orlando International Dragon Boat Festival took place at Downtown Disney on Oct. 18.

Forty-six teams with 20 paddlers each came from as far as Canada and Trinidad and Tobago, and as near as Orlando and Tampa. The Premiere Mixed Championship honor went to the Manayunk crew from Philadelphia. The Disney Dragons, comprised of cast members, took the Industry cup in the hospitality challenge.



The Rachael Ray Show recorded a segment called "Hey, Can You Cook?!" on Oct. 12 at Epcot. Park guests were welcome to watch the segments but Rachael Ray herself wasn't in attendance.



Soap Opera mega-star Susan Lucci attended the annual Super Soap Weekend at Disney's Hollywood Studios on Nov. 15 and 16. More than 35 ABC soap opera stars greeted fans throughout the theme park. This is the final year for Super Soap Weekend, as next year the soap stars will be touring the United States instead.



The National Fan Fantasy Club (NFFC) held their 3rd Annual Disneyana Florida Convention from Oct. 3 to 5. A popular part of the convention was the Show and Sale where Disney fans could mingle and browse through the many Disney collectibles on sale.

Walking With Dinosaurs - The Live Experience tour made a stop at the Amway Arena in downtown Orlando in mid-Novemeber.

The show is based on the award-winning BBC Television Series and originated in Australia before coming to the U.S.



CHILL OUT IN ORLANDO WITH

ICE!

Written by Kevin Yee

Construction photos by Kevin Yee

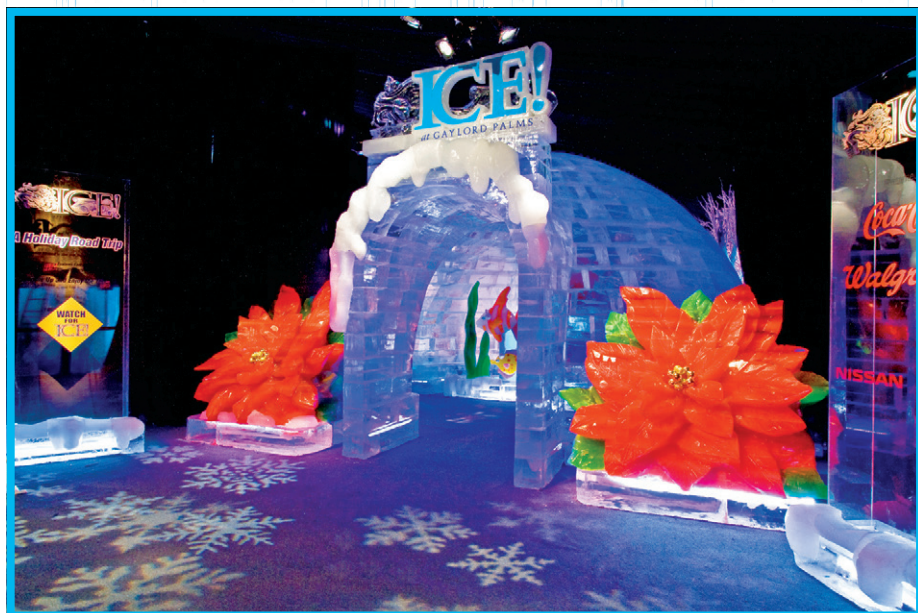
ICE! photos by Matt Roseboom and Gaylord Palms

Imagine how you might marvel if you stepped foot into a great hall where everything around you – walls, furnishings, statues – were made out of ornately carved wood. Just that level of artistry is required to bring to life ICE!, an annual spectacle at the Gaylord Palms Resort that must be seen to be believed.

To make ICE! each year, designers construct an 18,000-square-foot insulated container, truck in two-million pounds of ice, add food coloring, and hire talented artists to carve the 5,000 blocks of ice into oversized sculptures, using water almost exclusively as the glue.

Now in its sixth year, ICE! is completely rebuilt from scratch for each incarnation. This season the theme is “Santa’s Arctic Blast,” featuring numerous appearances by the jolly one himself. In years past, scenes included the North Pole, oversized toys, candy and a startling Nativity rendered in clear, rather than colored, ice. As always, one of the main sequences is an ice castle with slides made out of ice. Where else can you get that experience? Especially in Florida.

To prepare the exhibit, a parking lot at Gaylord Palms is cleared to make room for “the Florida Fridge,” an insulated set of containers that are chilled down to a constant nine degrees fahrenheit, and



then the ice is brought in, pallet by pallet, for 21 days. Some of the ice blocks are created with food coloring mixed in the water, enabling the finished sculptures to appear in vibrant colors.

Carving is done on-site by 40 skilled artisans from Harbin, China, many of whom are also responsible for the world-famous Ice-Snow Festival held every winter in their home city. In fact, the Harbin festival was the inspiration for the ICE! exhibit. The artisans, some of whom call ice carving their sole profession, bring along their own tools from China. When they finish building the structures in Orlando, most of them head back to Harbin to construct their own

Ice-Snow Festival. Ten of them remain behind to repair and maintain the Gaylord Palms exhibit each morning before it re-opens to visitors.

Planning the exhibit is a full-year process. Each January, while memories of the current show are still fresh, the Gaylord Palms team works with Hotepp, a design firm in New York City, to sketch out the elements and story line for the next year. At each step, engineers in China weigh in regarding the feasibility of the concepts. They would know, for instance, if a structure was too top-heavy to be built using ice. As ideas firm up over the ensuing months, Gaylord Palms brings on International Special

Attractions (based in Branson, Mo.) to coordinate the logistics of the visit by the international artisans. Once the temporary structure is created, it takes almost two days for the four oversized chillers to bring the temperature low enough to hold ice, and the carving can begin in earnest in mid-October.

Because the building is kept so cold to prevent any melting, visitors really have to bundle up. The Gaylord Palms provides warm parkas of all sizes, but you'll want to be sure you're wearing long pants and shoes with socks. Savvy visitors should also bring along gloves, though you can also purchase these at the hotel if desired.

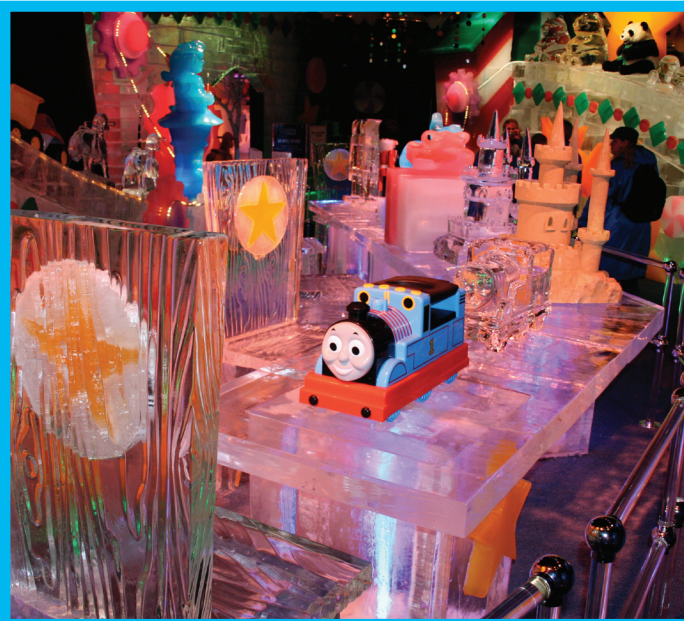
It's not only children who gape at the oversized exhibits and dart around them in awe. Keith Salwoski, chief publicist for the Gaylord Palms, notes that "Many visitors come without kids and still go through the slides, some as old as 90 years. That [90-year-old] lady said 'it made me feel like a kid again.' She didn't come intending to go on the slides, but she saw how much fun the kids were having and she wanted to go down too."

New this year will be a statue of Santa Claus so oversized in scale that adults, allowed to sit on his icy knee, will look as small as children again. The entire exhibit is full of such photo opportunities, helped along by dramatic ceiling lighting and special touches such as hundreds of fiber optics and LEDs embedded right into the ice.

CONSTRUCTION TO COMPLETION

Ice blocks of all colors are delivered in pallets to Gaylord Palms over the course of 21 days. Ice carvers carve details into the ice before the exhibit is assembled and maintain it throughout its run. Once the exhibit is fully put together, what at one time seemed like a warehouse full of cubed popsicles shines in a multitude of sparkling creations for guests of all ages to enjoy.





WINTER WONDERLAND ICE! features many unique ice sculptures from a gingerbread house to a dining room table.

ICE! is open daily through Jan. 4, including holidays. Hours vary, but the exhibit will usually open mid-morning and remain open until 9 p.m. Tickets range in price from \$9.99 to \$24.99, with discounts for advance online purchases made at www.gaylordpalms.com. There is also a \$12 daily parking fee. But you can get your parking validated if you dine at one of the resort's restaurants.

Special packages include private wedding proposals or Parrandas Night, which targets the Latino community. The rest of the hotel gets into the swing of things during the season, with a gnome hunt, a large display of holiday wreaths, free cocoa for ICE! visitors, and an energetic light show in the main atrium.

For many visitors, the experience of the coldness incongruously transplanted to

Orlando will feel not just unique, but somehow primal. Salwoski notes that in the first years of the exhibit, "We didn't realize how people would connect with the coldness or how much they're yearning for that."

Other visitors focus not on the cold temperatures but on the carvings. In terms of texture, working with ice is similar to working with wood, so for all intents and purposes,

the hall might as well be full of enormous, ornate wooden structures. "It takes a lot to impress people these days," noted Salwoski, "especially people in Orlando. In their minds, anything is possible. We think this is one of those things that people stop and realize this is all done by hand... this is true artistry."

Who's to say that the cold alone gives them that rosy glow in their cheeks? Maybe all that marveling and amazement do make visitors feel like children again, after all.



ORLANDO

I-4/Exit 75A

Monumental Movieland



1-4 People / +Tax & Resort Fee

\$49

Request
Code
"OAM"

Sun/Thurs Thru 2/1/09
Per Room/Per Night

407-351-3900

6233 International Dr.

- 261 Rooms w/ Interior Corridors
- Outdoor Heated Pool
- Across from Wet 'N' Wild
- **FREE** Shuttle Service to Universal & SeaWorld
- Black Angus Restaurant

www.monumentalmovielandhotel.com

With coupon at check-in. Based on availability. Not valid with other discounts, during holidays or special events.



AAA
Approved



AGED 2 PERFECTION GATORLAND

Family owned and operated since 1949!



\$2.50 off

ADULT ADMISSION (UP TO 6 PEOPLE)

Not valid with any other coupons or discounts. Prices subject to change without notice. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase.



(407) 855-5496 www.gatorland.com

ATMG08

14501 S. Orange Blossom Trail Orlando, Florida 32837

21st CENTURY CHRISTMAS

HOW DISNEY KEEPS ITS HOLIDAYS UP-TO-DATE

BY RICKY BRIGANTE

Decorating an average house for the holidays might involve stringing a couple hundred lights along a rooftop, staking a few decorations into the front lawn and adorning a six-foot tree with ornaments and garland. After the season ends, the decorations are tucked away in an attic or closet, not to be touched until the following year. But replace the average house with more than 30,000 acres of Walt Disney World property, and it takes a whole lot more than an attic full of goodies to deck the halls.

While you might have started planning this year's holiday decorations around Thanksgiving, the 26-person team at Disney World's Holiday Services began planning this year's holiday decorations last year. When speaking to Lisa Borotkanics, manager of Holiday Services, it became increasingly clear that preparing for a holiday season at Walt Disney World is anything but similar to preparing at home.

"We generally plan a year in advance so that we can source the materials to create the holiday decor," said Borotkanics. When was the last time you used the phrase "source the materials" in talking about your Christmas ornaments?

Part of Walt Disney World's ongoing popularity lies within the fact that its designers are always looking for ways to keep it new and fresh. After all, Walt

Disney said of his original theme park in California, "Disneyland will never be completed. It will continue to grow as long as there is imagination left in the world." The same is true for every aspect of Walt Disney World, all the way down to regular updates of its holiday decor.

While the overall theme of the park and resort decor does not usually change from year to year, some of the specific decorations will. According to Borotkanics, general ornamentation found throughout Walt Disney World property has an average lifespan of around four years. Interior decorations, including garland, trees and lighting, will last roughly six years. This does not mean, however, that Disney only updates its holiday decorations every four to six years.

Each year, Holiday Services, along with general managers from the parks and resorts as well as Imagineers, work together to create new holiday concepts and ideas. The concepts begin within the walls of Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI). "Our WDI team works together to put out the concepts and themes of the resort," explained Borotkanics, "Then we [Holiday Services] try to incorporate their themes and concepts into the resort." In the process, many concepts are drawn up, presentations are made featuring samples of new decorations, and ultimately an overall concept is agreed upon.

For 2008, it was agreed that the Contemporary Resort was due for some new holiday decorations. This hotel



Cecil Gordon of Holiday Services touches up an angel tree-topper inside one of the warehouses.

has seen its share of updates over the last couple of years including brand new furnishings inside its rooms, the addition of a new restaurant (The Wave), and an ongoing reworking of the main concourse level. So it was a natural fit that it should also receive a holiday update.

While the Contemporary has a modern flair to its decor, Borotkanics explained that in terms of holiday decorations, it's actually a, "contemporary classic hotel, unlike Disney's Animal Kingdom park where it is themed heavily toward the environment." In other words, most of the decorations found within the Contemporary are of the traditional variety – but definitely not traditional in size.

The biggest holiday decoration in all of Walt Disney World can be found just outside the Contemporary Resort in the form of a 70-foot-tall Christmas tree. Borotkanics said that this year, the tree "has been refoiled and redesigned. It used to be a frame tree and now it's what we call a pole tree." She quickly added, "Not to be confused with poultry." She must have had Thanks-



**Lisa Borotkanics,
Holiday Services
Manager**



Contemporary Christmas tree in 2007

giving on the mind. After all, the tree was slated to be installed just before Thanksgiving, only a couple of weeks after we spoke with her.

Not only do the giant Christmas tree's faux-branches look better than ever, but it also has, for the first time, new ornamentation that lights up in multiple colors from the inside, courtesy of bright LED lights. It's all part of a resort-wide switch from incandescent bulbs to longer-lasting, environmentally-friendly LEDs. According to Borotkanics, as of this year, all of the holiday lighting across Walt Disney World's hotels features only LED and compact florescent lighting and in 2009 the same will be true for all four of its theme parks.

Beyond the light-up ornaments, other special prop elements have been designed for the Contemporary's monumental tree. "If you're decorating a 70-foot tree, you wouldn't necessarily go to market for ornaments that size," said Borotkanics. Disney has their special ornaments/props manufactured specifically for their trees.

Decorations inside the Contemporary Resort include custom swags that cover the lobby chairs, two trees on either side of the main entrance and garland running across the front desk. There are even decorations for guests of all ages with adult and child trees found in a lounge area.

It takes 75 to 80 workers to install the Contemporary's Christmas tree and all of its other decorations. Why so many? Because they do it all in a single night. Guests go to sleep one night and wake up the next morning to a fully-decorated hotel, as if by magic. The night-shift workers are from all trades including metal workers, electricians, security, drivers and managers, including Borotkanics who makes sure it all goes smoothly. This holiday troop will sometimes even decorate several Walt Disney World locations in one night.

The Contemporary Resort is not the only area of Walt Disney World that is receiving new decor this year. At the Magic Kingdom, an all-new Mickey Mouse floral display (pictured right) welcomes guests to the park. Just beyond the train station, Santa Claus himself has a new meet and greet set near City Hall.

While Walt Disney World does focus most of its holiday decorations on Christmas, there are some decorations found throughout its property that represent other holidays. The most notable is a set of five scenes located at Downtown Disney near the Portobello Yacht Club that include Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Ramadan, Three Kings Day, and a nativity. Each hotel front desk and theme park guest services desk also features a menorah.

Walt Disney World's Holiday Services decorates the entire Walt Disney World company, which not only includes the theme parks and resorts in Orlando, but also Disney's Vero Beach Resort, Disney's Hilton Head Island Resort in South Carolina, and the Disney



Cruise Line ships. It's no wonder that it requires a warehouse of more than 54,000 square feet to house all of the holiday decorations, floor-to-ceiling, during the non-holiday months of the year. When it is finally time to bring out the decorations, it takes 153 trailer loads to haul it all to its various destinations.

While the Walt Disney World holiday season lasts less than two months, the Holiday Services team works year-round to ensure that guests making an end-of-the-year trip to the parks and resorts experience nothing but the most wonderful (and magical) time of the year. 🌲

Discover the Secret Behind Monumental



Monumental Hotel Orlando
 12120 International Drive • Orlando, FL 32821
 877-239-1222
monumentalhotelorlando.com

AAA Approved

Monumental Hotel Orlando is a unique Luxury Hotel situated on International Drive, one mile from SeaWorld and Orlando Premium Outlets, and two miles from the Orlando County Convention Center. Deluxe guest rooms, one style pool with Jacuzzi, & full-service restaurant.

Call today and request Code OAM to receive a 20% discount.



SeaWorld recently introduced a new theatrical performance, *A'Lure, The Call of the Ocean*. Set to a musical score recorded by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the 30-minute production takes guests on a journey through the ocean's depths and mysteries, telling the tale of sea sirens, whose hypnotic calls have lured entranced fishermen into their underwater lairs for centuries.

Orlando Attractions Magazine was invited to see what goes on behind the scenes in preparation for each day's performances.

A PHOTO FEATURE

with photos by MATT ROSEBOOM





Even though the first performance of A'Lure each day isn't scheduled until after noon, the show's dancers and acrobats begin their days at around 9 a.m. with warm-up and stretching exercises. The tumblers featured in the show are all from an acrobatics school in Puyang City, China. Many of the performers speak little to no English. Pictured above and right, their strict female teacher leads them along with the show's dancers through many different warm-ups.

The morning practice sessions do not only involve stretching and exercising. They also utilize the time to practice the individual talents each performer uses in the show which includes performing flips and other gymnastic feats on hidden trampolines, cartwheeling across the stage, riding a unicycle, balancing inside the German wheel and maintaining artful control over the diablo yo-yo.

Pictured below, *Orlando Attractions Magazine* Creative Director Ricky Brigante receives a lesson (with aid of a translator) using the diablo yo-yo and Editor-In-Chief Matt Roseboom (below right) attempts to make his way around the German Wheel (only falling out once). Neither is as easy as the show's performers make them look!



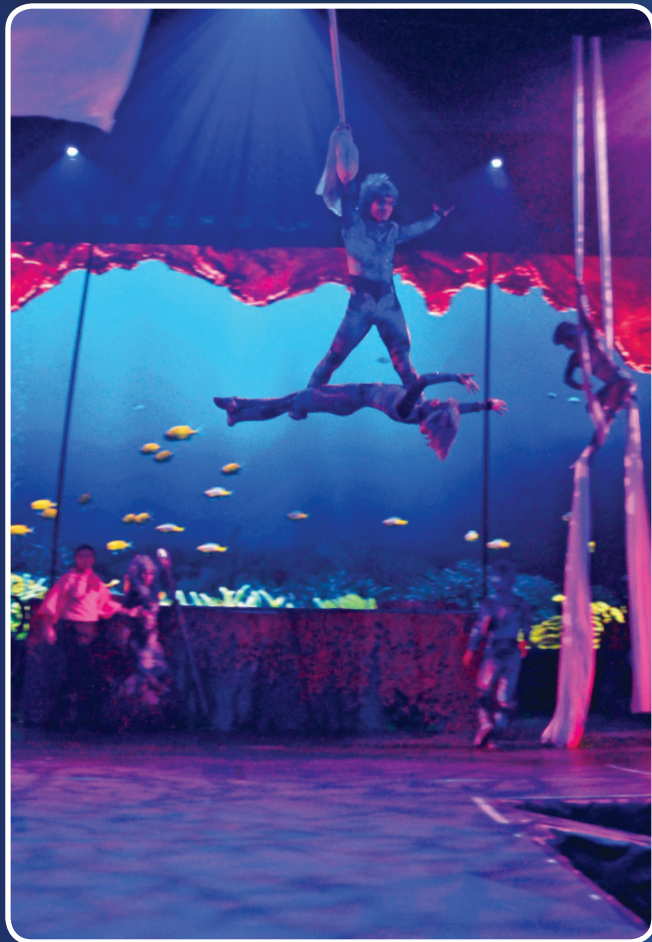


Following warm-up, exercise and practice, the final step before the show begins is to head backstage to prepare hair, apply make-up and put on costumes. Hair dressing for A'Lure is fairly simple as almost all of the show's performers wear tight-fitting, brightly-colored wigs. Likewise, the costumes featured in the show are both brightly-colored and tight-fitting, with flowing elements added to the female costumes. While each performer has a similar make-up design, some do add their own flair to their eyes or cheeks to give them a unique look.

Production Manager of Casting Muffett Baker (left) said the recent opening of the show was definitely not put together quickly. "It's been in development for quite a while – several months – to bring it to life on the stage for us now." And to bring the show to life, it takes a sizeable cast. "For every show, you'll have 12 acrobats that come to us from China and there are also five dancers and two principals: the siren and the fisherman [below left]."

Beyond a short narration, no dialogue is spoken for the entire duration of the show. Instead, the story of a fisherman sucked under the waves and into the world of Sea Sirens is told through the use of emotion-driving music and physical acting. But for most watching, the story is secondary to the amazing acrobatics being performed almost constantly throughout the show's duration, a mesmerizing example of which can be seen with the Chinese pole climbers pictured below, who fly back and forth (and up and down), around and across the stage, bouncing their way to the top of the 20-plus foot-tall poles within seconds.





A large part of the show is found on the oversized projection screen – creating an underwater world displaying animated images of interactive schools of fish, manta rays and a 25-foot sea serpent. The previous show, *Odyssey*, used the screen but not to this extent. “There are some elements that have looped over into this show, but the major difference is our video screen which helps to take us underwater and it’s very interactive,” said Baker. “Our creative people are always looking at new ways to take the stories that they want to tell and make them bigger and better.”

“We’re always looking for new ways to tell the stories of what might be going on under the ocean that we just never know about,” added Baker. “When you know about all the different stories and myths and everything of the ocean it just sets your imagination wild, so it’s just another twist and turn trying to figure out what would, what could, be under the ocean.”

Daily performances of *A'Lure, The Call of the Ocean*, can be seen in SeaWorld’s Nautilus Theater and is included with park admission.

Piano Man

**Bob Jackson
Thrills Audiences
With His Piano-
Playing Antics**

By Kimberly Button



If you walk into the lobby of Disney's Port Orleans Resort Riverside at night, don't be surprised if you are greeted by the sound of raucous laughter and off-pitch singing. Walking towards the source of the cacophony wafting over the sounds of a piano, your curiosity will only be piqued by the standing room-only crowds that hide the source of the gaiety.

In a city known for its world-class entertainment, you might think that you have suddenly come upon a well-known comedian, costumed characters or perhaps a visiting musician. If you can catch a glimpse of the stage, though, you will soon find out this entertainer who has the crowd rolling in the aisles with laughter is someone that you have probably never heard of ... but you should.

Dressed in an outrageous outfit of candy apple red pants with matching suspenders, shoes and a bowler hat, Bob Jackson has been entertaining crowds for 35 years. His talents as a comedian, pianist and entertainer can be enjoyed at all three of Orlando's theme park resorts, a testament to Jackson's high-caliber performances that amazingly entertain both young and old alike. With a self deprecating sense of humor and a master's touch at the piano, Jackson, who has been lovingly branded Yehaa Bob by his fans, is a one-person wonder who can turn a crowd full of strangers into a happy extended family in a matter of minutes.

Jackson got his start in the

entertainment business in 1972. "I was just playing all kinds of bands, then I had my own band and we traveled the midwest. Then my wife joined the band and we would live abroad half of the year and live in Florida half of the year," Jackson said. "We started having kids and had to settle down."

Soon after settling down in Orlando, Jackson's first steady job was playing piano in the jazz band at Rosie O'Grady's. While later playing dueling pianos at Blazing Pianos for several years, a fellow musician informed Jackson that he was leaving his job at Disney's Port Orleans Resort and there was a position open. Bob has been performing at the Walt Disney World Resort more than 11 years since that fateful conversation.

As soon as Jackson enters the River

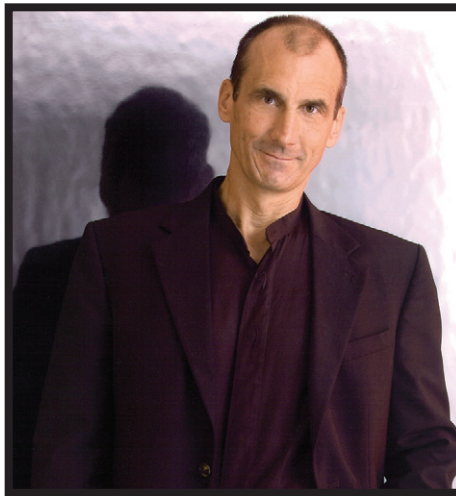
Roost Lounge at Disney's Port Orleans Resort Riverside, his youngest fans start clamoring for his attention well before the show begins. Children who are familiar with Jackson, whether they were at a show the night before or several years ago, race up to the stage to give him pictures that they have drawn or photographs that were taken in times gone by. Jackson posts each treasure on a large bulletin board next to his piano on stage. Kids who are in the know seize the chance to have their pictures taken with the entertainer who will soon be swamped with visitors vying for his attention during his first break between sets.

After a decade of solo performances, Jackson has become an extended family member for many visitors who repeatedly frequent his shows. "There are families that come every year or twice a year or once a month," Jackson said. "Last weekend a man came down from Cincinnati and brought me a can of Skyline Chili. I have people from Canada that bring me maple syrup and people from Philadelphia who bring me Tastykakes. There's a couple who comes down from Rhode Island and they'll come practically every month and they're regulars. I have a monthly mailing list of over 1,250 people that I send my monthly schedule to. If they say they're coming, I say 'I'll watch for you.'"



Perhaps the reason that so many people keep coming back is that Jackson treats every single member of his audience like family. During his breaks, he will walk through the room and stop to talk to every single table. Jackson routinely asks his guests "Where are you from?" to which the response will always be, "me, too!" After coaching the crowd at the beginning of his sets, newcomers who join the festivities in the middle of a performance and are asked where they are from will always receive a deafening roar of "me, too!" from the entire audience.

Though camaraderie is quickly formed by the feeling that everyone comes from the same place, Jackson solidifies his personal approach by remembering everyone's name in the audience. During his performances, he will personalize well-known tunes by inserting their names or ask for audience participation by calling on specific guests. With a fun, laid-back attitude that is



Jackson without the "Yehaa"

never embarrassing or uncomfortable, guests of Jackson's performances feel like they are being entertained by the eccentric uncle who always seems to liven up family get-togethers.

While Jackson truly enjoys the personal interaction that he has with his guests, it is not all fun and games. "I will lose three pounds of weight each

night at Disney, just from sweating and jumping around. It's a pretty physically demanding performance. I will do an hour and a half set, then a 15 minute meet and greet, followed by a 45 minute set, then another 15 minute meet and greet and end with a 30 minute set, all with no breaks, but that's just the way I like to do it," Jackson said.

Indeed, watching Jackson performing on stage is enough to make you feel like you are losing your own breath and cause your own

knees to hurt, as he balances precariously on his piano bench while rocking the piano back and forth so powerfully that you think it is going to fly through the wall. As Jackson scales the piano bench for the umpteenth time and stands atop while alternating playing a bugle and chugging a bottle of water, you will be truly thankful that you are lazily sitting in a cozy chair sipping a martini while enjoying his hard work.

With a highly physical performance at Disney five nights a week, it is hard to believe that Jackson has the energy to do performances at other locations as well, sometimes with shows at two different locations in one day. He also performs two days a week at Auggie's Jammin' Piano Bar at the Gaylord Palms Resort and he sometimes performs at Pat O'Brien's at Universal's CityWalk and the Seafire Inn at SeaWorld. Each location has a different repertoire and though there is not as much personal interaction at the non-Disney shows, Jackson's skill at the piano is always showcased in his dueling-piano performances.

"At the Gaylord Palms I have an adult show, not that we get into adult material, but there are never any kids," Jackson said. At SeaWorld, "I start out with a song in French and Spanish, then we take all requests," he said.

Regardless of which one of Jackson's performances you see, you will likely walk away with a newfound respect for this hard working entertainer.

"He was just so entertaining," said John Lewis of Orlando. "It's amazing that he can keep the energy up for so long in a room of adults who are all strangers."

Though Jackson admits that his performances do wear him out, he is quick to point out that he does it all for the sake of his fans. "The best part is the people," Jackson said. "Just watching them have fun. And the kids. I love the kids. They're the best."

For a schedule of Bob Jackson's performances, visit his Web site at www.yehaabob.com.



Save When you
10% mention
this ad

The Closest Vacation Homes
to all Orlando Theme Parks
and Attractions

**Fully Equipped 2 to 7
Bedroom Vacation Homes
and Condo's**

**Rates from \$69
per night**

USA Tel: 407.932.3683
UK Tel: 0871 7115371
Toll Free: 1.800.621.7888







Alexander

Florida Holiday
Homes

www.FloridaSunshine.com

DISNEYANA

Disney fans have nothing but options when starting a collection.

By Andrew Kiste
with Ricky Brigante

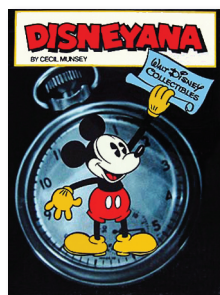
Some people collect baseball cards. Others collect rare works of art or ceramic figurines such as Precious Moments. Although less well-known, there is a category of collecting that inspires a deep passion among fans of all things Disney. The collecting of Disney memorabilia, called Disneyana, involves the accumulation of objects that cover a range as deep and wide as an Imagineer's imagination.

Disneyana can include anything from pins, kitchen supplies or original artwork, to clothing, watches, magazines or anything else that catches a collector's fancy. The link between all of these objects lies simply in the vast world of Disney.

A Brief History of Disneyana

Disney collecting dates back to the 1960s when author Malcom Willits published a catalog called *The Collector's Book Store*. In this publication, Willits coined the term Disneyana as a category for various Disney merchandise being sold through his mail order catalog. Willits separated Disneyana into two categories which collectors continue to use today. These categories are Vintage Disneyana – Disney memorabilia from Walt Disney's work in the company prior to his death, and Contemporary Disneyana – objects from 1968 to the present day.

The first book specifically about Disneyana was written in 1974 by author Cecil Munsey, entitled *Disneyana: Walt Disney Collectibles*.



In his book, Munsey established what constitutes Disneyana, and published pictures and prices of merchandise. Spurred by Munsey's book, the Walt Disney Company opened the first Disneyana Shop on Disneyland's Main Street, USA in 1974. This store later closed in 1986, to reopen in 1998. During its first run from 1974 to 1986, the Disneyana Shop sold new Disneyana merchandise as well as vintage collectibles by outside sources. Amazingly, original film cels created by Disney animators were sold for as low as \$1.47 each. (Today, these cels can fetch thousands of dollars each!)

Collector's Clubs

Wanting to create their own club to honor the collecting of Disneyana, 12 avid collectors decided to create a club in 1979 to celebrate the legacy of Walt Disney, naming it The Mouse Club.

As the popularity of collecting Disneyana began to grow, The Mouse Club held its first ever Disneyana Convention at the Jolly Roger Inn in Anaheim, Calif. – across the street from Disneyland – in 1982. The Disneyana Convention featured the largest collection of Disney memorabilia in one place up to that point.

As membership in The Mouse Club continued to increase, a spinoff organization known as the National Fantasy Fan Club (NFFC), was developed with a focus on highlighting the creative forces behind The Walt Disney Company. Their annual Strictly Disneyana Show and Sale events are held in Florida and California, some receiving more than 1,000 attendees.

In response to the growing popularity of Disneyana collecting, Disney even began holding its own Official Disneyana

Convention at Walt Disney World's Contemporary Resort in 1992. NFFC National President Kendra Trahan tells how Disney began their conventions with the NFFC's help. "Disney came to us and got their first mailing list from NFFC," said Trahan. The official Disney convention occurred annually through 2004.

While The Mouse Club doesn't exist today, the NFFC is going strong, hosting regular Disney-related events throughout the world. With the creation of eBay, the market for Disney collectibles has changed significantly and so has the NFFC. "When our club first began in 1984, the Strictly Disneyana Show and Sales were the only place to find Disneyana collectibles. Then with the success of eBay and online shopping, Disneyana became more widely available to the world," Trahan explained. "So as a club, our Show and Sale is still very popular and people love to come together to catch up, but the club had to evolve. Now the club is for Disney collectors, but also enthusiasts."

But even in the club's evolution, the NFFC still manages to tie many of their experiences back to the world of Disney collecting. "In Florida [in 2008] our conventioners were invited to a backstage tour of the Merchandise Warehouse," Trahan said, "For Disneyana collectors this was a dream come true to see all the merchandise of [Walt Disney World] stored and cataloged in one location."

While the world of Disneyana is very different today than it was when the term was coined in the 1960s, the passion for Disney collectibles is still strong, with a bigger variety of products for fans to choose from than ever before.

You Might be a Collector If...

You may already be collecting Disneyana without even knowing it. If you have a collection of Disney movies like *Bambi*, *The Love Bug*, *Dumbo*, *The Jungle Book*, *Lilo & Stitch*, or *Ratatouille*, you're already a collector. Other pieces of Disneyana that you may already own include toys from McDonald's Happy Meals, dolls of your favorite Disney characters, or even clothing with Disney characters or logos.

Passionate collectors focus on items that must be sought out in order to add them to their collection. Presently, paper collectibles, known as ephemera, are popular pieces of Disneyana. Many of these paper collectibles can be acquired from the Disney theme parks around the world.

One easy-to-obtain bit of ephemera is an unused Fastpass ticket. The Fastpass is a ticket that allows you to skip the lines at some of your favorite Disney theme park attractions. Fastpasses are acquired for free with park admission by simply feeding your ticket into a Fastpass machine, which then returns your park ticket along with your Fastpass. Other popular paper collectibles include park entry tickets, park maps and schedules.

Collectors of Disneyana also often find collectibles outside the parks that are a little bit more difficult to acquire. These paper collectibles include original concept art and blueprints for the resorts and attractions, letters or memos from Walt Disney to his company executives, ticket books from Walt Disney World and Disneyland, and, of course, Walt Disney's personal autograph.



Artwork is another widely popular style of Disney collectible. Disneyana collectors often purchase original animation cels from hand-drawn feature films, lithographs (which are reproductions of artwork from Disney's full-length animated films), conceptual artwork, and posters promoting Disney films, shorts, theme parks or attractions. New prints of varying printing processes are sold for as little as \$10 ranging up into the hundreds of dollars. Likewise, original, one-of-a-kind artwork may be sold for thousands of dollars.

Collectors of Disneyana may also focus on figurine or model collecting. A company called Enesco sells ceramic figurines, as part of the Walt Disney Classics Collection, depicting popular scenes from classic Disney movies and cartoon shorts (like Pete's dragon pictured here). Enesco also produces figurines for the holidays, such as one of Tinkerbell wearing a witch's cap for the Halloween season, as well as one of Donald

Duck wearing a Santa Claus hat and struggling with a string of Christmas lights.

Disney collecting even invades everyday life with Disney-branded home goods. Guests may purchase coffee mugs, plates, blankets, shower



Indoor Skydiving... Experience it!



INDOOR SKYDIVING

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
**RAIN OR SHINE,
OPEN EVERY DAY!**

6805 Visitors Circle, Orlando
(across from Wet'n Wild)

RESERVATIONS SUGGESTED:

(407) 903-1150

www.SkyVentureOrlando.com

\$5 OFF any combo package!
Valid up to 6 people
Expires 12/31/08.
Not valid with any other offer. (OA)

curtains, lamps and televisions, all with a Disney theme. Disney has even recently released an online catalog, called The Disney Resort Collection, found at disneyresortcollection.com where guests can purchase items just like the ones used in their resort rooms.

If you are a hard-core Disney theme park fan, or even have a special place in your heart for a specific celebration or attraction, there are many collectibles specifically for you – if you know where to find them. There are a few stores on eBay that sell practically any Disney collectible you could possibly want, including signs from the parks, ride vehicles, cast member costumes, furniture from the resorts, strollers and even the touchpads from the now defunct Who Wants to be a Millionaire? Play It! attraction from Disney's Hollywood Studios.

Small Items, Big Value

A popular stop for Disneyana collectors is at Robert Olszewski Studios, a company that specializes in the recreation of some of the most famous scenes and sights of the Walt Disney Company in miniature.

Robert Olszewski began working with the Walt Disney Company in 1987 while employed by the Grolier Company. There he was commissioned to produce a collection of miniatures based on classic Disney animated feature films. This collection was ultimately called the Disney Marquee Collection. Eight years later, Robert Olszewski founded his own studio which currently produces miniature sculpted versions of popular Disneyland and Walt Disney World attractions including Pirates of the Caribbean, Peter Pan's Flight, and the Haunted Mansion. But it's the Main Street U.S.A. Collection that has collectors really excited.

Robert Olszewski's brother, Ray Olszewski, noted, "The Disneyland and Walt Disney Main Street, U.S.A. Collections have been an overwhelming success." Sold exclusively at the theme parks in Anaheim, the Disneyland Main



Olszewski's Main Street, U.S.A. miniature is almost lifelike.

Street U.S.A. Collection recreates the entire span of Main Street at Disneyland Park, from the turnstiles at the entrance all the way around the Hub, up to and including Sleeping Beauty Castle. Collectors looking to purchase the entire Main Street U.S.A. Collection, as well as the platform on which to house all of the individual buildings, can expect to pay upwards of \$5,000 for the entire set.

Disneyana Changed Forever

The face of Disney collecting changed with the launch of Disney Pin Trading in 1999. While Disney had been producing pins featuring popular characters since the early days of Mickey Mouse in the 1930s, it wasn't until the Millenium Celebration that pin trading was launched in a big way.

Disney Pin Trading is currently perhaps the most popular form of Disneyana collecting. Similar to lapel pins, these official trading pins are essentially tiny, handmade pieces of artwork featuring popular Disney logos, theme park attraction scenes or animated characters. A system of trading takes place between guests and cast members at all Disney theme parks in the United States as well as those found in Paris and Hong Kong and even on the Disney Cruise Line. All a novice collector needs to get started

is a pin or two.

Steven Miller, project manager for Disney Pin Trading at Walt Disney World, explained that unlike many areas of Disneyana collecting, the world of pins is about more than just buying merchandise. "It becomes more than just collecting great Disney pins ... Here you have a chance to meet people and to share stories and to share what's important to them," said Miller. "Unlike those other collectible items like big figs or giclees that you can display in your home ... but with pins, it's so portable that you can take it anywhere. ... All you have to do is put a lanyard on with 12 pins and you have an instant collection that goes around anyplace."

Disney Pin Trading has been a hit both with guests new to the collecting world but also amongst those who have been collecting Disneyana for decades. "It gives people a chance to supplement their collections," said Miller.

Official Disney Pin Trading will be celebrating its 10th year on Oct. 1, 2009 and with that milestone Miller insists that it has established itself as a permanent area of Disney collecting with plenty more inventive

designs on the way (Miller sent us an exclusive sneak preview, pictured here, of a Haunted Mansion pin due out in Feb. 2009).



© Disney

How to Begin?

The easiest way to start a Disneyana collection is to practice what is known as "Preference Collecting." This collection method entails the purchase and collection of whatever you find appealing.

"I just buy whatever I like, said Disney fan Amber DeGraaf (right). "I like to buy stuff with the Magic Kingdom logo. I also like the monorail and the Contemporary Resort."



People who prefer this type of collecting may also purchase things that have some sort of sentimental value to them. Fan Kara Lamson explained, "Everything I buy at Disney has some sort of meaning to me – a piece to help spark my memory of my amazing time during my vacation."

Another method of collecting is known as "Themed Collecting". People who utilize this method purchase Disneyana that adheres to a central theme, such as merchandise exclusively involving a particular character, activity or attraction. Donald Duck fan Rita Davis said, "Whenever I go to the parks, I collect Donald Duck merchandise. I started collecting Donald Duck when I was a little girl. I have over 550 Donald Duck items in my collection, and display most of the items in a curio, bookcase, and on the walls of my home."



"I have a few favorites in my collection," Davis added, "such as a Donald soda bottle, a life-size Donald stuffed animal and Donald nesting dolls. I am always looking for other Donald Duck items to add to my collection."

Ricky Brigante, *Orlando Attractions Magazine* publisher and co-author of this article, even has his own massive themed collection (partially pictured above) of anything and everything related to The Haunted Mansion attraction, including art prints, sculptures, lamps, watches, and plenty of pins.

The theme of a collection does not have to be a character or attraction. Instead it can simply surround a certain type of Disneyana. Some collectors like to collect Disney models or sculptures, some like to collect theme park props and others are interested in collecting original and conceptual artwork. Rita Davis explains, "My current interest is in collecting pins. When I go to Walt Disney World, I usually take about 50 or 60 pins to trade with cast members and other pin traders. ... I have 290 Donald pins in my collection."

Disney Pin Trading project manager Steven Miller explained that a pin collection says a lot about the collector who owns it, "I think when people take pride in [the fact that] they like a certain character, or they like a certain attraction, or they like a certain theme, they're going to showcase that in their particular collection. ... It really showcases their personality."

Whether you're new to the Disney parks or you've lost count of how many times you've walked through the turnstiles, you'll no doubt



purchase a few keepsakes during your trip. Chances are that the next time you're in a Disney theme park, you'll spot a new item, be it a pin or a sculpture, that features your favorite character or just catches your eye for its artistic value, and, in time, these few items will quickly add up to create an interesting and exciting collection of Disneyana.



E-TICKET SHORT FICTION

KEEP YOUR ARMS AND LEGS

INSIDE THE MARGINS

www.admitonepress.com



BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE WALT DISNEY WORLD AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

A 44-year tradition (started by Walt himself) offers fun - and a lot of work.

BY DEBORAH BRAUSER
PHOTOS BY MATT ROSEBOOM

CONGRATULATIONS 2009 AMBASSADORS



The 2009 Ambassadors, Clay Shoemaker and Vanessa Rosas, pose with Mickey Mouse and the outgoing ambassadors TC Newman (left) and Kerri MacPherson.

It's announcement day inside the Premiere Theater at Disney's Hollywood Studios and the air is crackling with excitement and anticipation. Each of the six finalists competing for the two coveted Walt Disney World Ambassador positions seems to have their own cheering squad within the gathering crowd. With the award ceremony not yet started, these very loud groups of family, friends and co-workers show their support with frenetic clapping, yelling, holding signs and banners, and even waving large photo face cut-outs on sticks. In other words, it's a pep rally of support as the final step in a long selection process gets underway.

After each finalist is introduced on stage (to deafening cheers) by ambassadors from years past, the President of Walt Disney World Resort

Meg Crofton walks to the microphone, flanked by the ultimate goodwill ambassador – Mickey Mouse. As Crofton opens a fancy scroll and reads the names of the 2009 Ambassador Team, it seems like a wonderful storybook ending. But for the two new ambassadors named, the journey is just beginning.

The new team will officially start their year-long assignment on Jan. 1, when they will participate in more than 1,000 local, national and international events while representing the Walt Disney World Resort, their fellow cast members, and the Central Florida community. But on this day in October, the two young winners are whisked away to start preparing for their new roles immediately. As TC Newman, one of the 2008 ambassadors, said, "It's more fun and more work than you can ever imagine." Which is just the way Walt Disney wanted it.

A LONG HISTORY OF AMBASSADORSHIP

Around the time of Disneyland's 10th anniversary celebration, an overwhelming number of requests for appearances were pouring in. So many in fact, that Walt Disney decided that he needed a representative to help him out. In 1964, he named his first ambassador from among his employees, with a new cast member chosen to carry out the tradition each year after that.

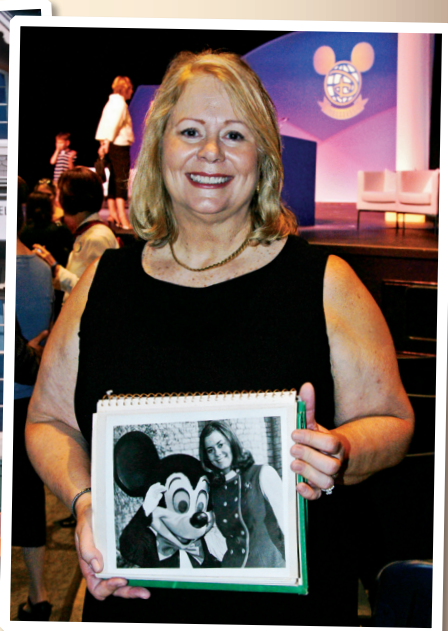
The year before Walt Disney World opened in 1971, Debbie Dane Brown was selected as the park's first ambassador and went on to travel almost 80,000 miles during her tenure. "I was 19 and flew out to California two days after I was selected," said Brown. "There, I spent three months learning all things Disney and then hit the road throughout the Eastern United States, Canada and some Central and South American countries to

talk about Walt Disney World and what we were going to be like. I told everyone I met, 'This is happening. It's going to be a thrill. Come see us!'" Opening day is an especially dear memory for her. "I was just overwhelmed by the fact that it had grown into something so grand, just an incredible dream of Walt Disney. And being able to represent what he dreamt of and loved was an incredible responsibility and honor."

Over the years, the goals of the ambassador program haven't changed, though its makeup has. The teams have had varying numbers, including a high of nine part-timers in 1995 – the same year the program welcomed its first male team members, to its current two full-time members. It's a tradition that is now held at all Disney parks throughout the world.

This year, Newman and her fellow ambassador team member Kerri MacPherson participated in more than 1,300 events, visited 38 children's hospitals during a 22-city national Season of Compassion Tour, traveled to Disney destinations around the globe, hosted VIPs and dignitaries at Disney World, cut dozens of grand-opening ribbons, made appearances with Disney characters, oversaw many cast member service anniversaries and milestones, and even read stories to Central Florida children. It's a job with hours that are always changing, sometimes starting as early as 5 a.m., sometimes going late into the evening, and many times including weekends. "We have a 24-hour resort," said Newman. "And though the ambassadors don't work 24 hours a day, we definitely have a varied schedule."

Angela Sola, manager of community relations, is in charge of the Ambassador program, while acting as chief scheduler, trainer and even surrogate mom for the team. This will be her fifth year overseeing the program. "They have a very, very, very busy schedule and have to be really good managers of their time. Since it's a position of service to others, they have to have a real passion and



The first Walt Disney World Ambassador Debbie Dane Brown (left, in red) with 1970 Disneyland Resort Ambassador Cathe Birk in California. Brown was in attendance at the announcement for Walt Disney World's 2009 ambassadors (right).

enthusiasm for the job, especially as they represent our 62,000 cast members. I tell them it's a 365-day opportunity."

As much work as there is, however, Newman said that the hardest part was getting to the position. "For me, it was a 10-year journey just to get the courage to interview. I hired into Disneyland in 1996 and was so impressed by the professionalism and poise of the ambassador team that I knew that was something I wanted to do. But I was too afraid to even tell anyone about my dream. Years later, after I joined the Walt Disney World organization, I eventually decided it was time to go for it." She was not selected the first year she went out. "But because I had such a passion for this, I went out a second year and made it. I would say that if being a Disney ambassador is in your heart, you'll find the courage to go through the interview process."

THE PROCESS

Each year, Disney World cast members who are over 18, have a high school degree or higher, and have more than one year of service are invited to attend informational sessions about the program in August, followed by a first-round session of group interviews.

From here, about 20 move onto round two and more extensive interviews. The finalists, which usually number about 10, are then selected around the end of September. After that, they prepare for "Media Day" – an extensive day of training in several crucial areas, with an opportunity to see themselves on camera. Then, the day before the final announcement is made, each finalist goes through one final interview in front of Meg Crofton and a panel of her senior leaders.

Many cast members have gone through this process several times, with quite a few making it all the way to finalist a couple of years in a row. There aren't any shortcuts for these participants, however, as everyone has to start over from the beginning each year.

Once a finalist is chosen and their term is completed, each ambassador has the option to return to their prior job or apply for another available position within the Disney World Resort. Just some of the past ambassadors include Melissa Valiquette, who is now director of entertainment at Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Michelle Reynolds, who is now the director of Disney's human resources department.

CAMERAS & MICROPHONES EVERYWHERE

At Media Day, this year's six finalists went through an extensive group session on stage techniques from Forest Bahruth, show director at Walt Disney World Entertainment, with suggestions on everything from the proper way to hold a microphone, to keeping attention while addressing an audience, and even how to walk, sit, and present themselves in the most confident way possible.

Individual training and evaluation sessions followed in presentation skills – standing in front of a room and giving a PowerPoint presentation that they were given for the first time just moments before; a written assignment – as all ambassadors are expected to write many articles and thank you cards; and a hands-on session on talking with the media – as those selected will be called upon to give hundreds of interviews for media outlets all over the world.

After completing an on-camera interview full of tough questions designed to see how he'd handle the unexpected, second-time finalist David Horvath seemed unfazed, while never losing his ever-present smile and sense of joy at just being there. He said that for him, the entire process has been almost like receiving a free education in professional enhancement. That's why he's going through it all again. "With any good development, you're pushed. You know, you don't really grow unless you're challenged. Otherwise, you're stagnant. And this is a challenge. But it's a really great growth opportunity too."

Alan Brunn, associate creative director for show development and production at Disney – and in charge of the presentation skills training for the day, agreed. When asked why any department at Disney would be happy with this process (when it could potentially mean losing a member of its team for a year, while keeping the position open for his or her return), Brunn said that it's because of the many different techniques that they learn. "The



There's no shortage of support in the crowd watching the ambassador announcement.

process not only helps the participant, it helps their entire department to have someone come back with this level of education and skills. Whether they move on or not, it's beneficial to everyone involved."

For first time finalist Vanessa Rosas, an industrial engineer at Disney World, she sees becoming an ambassador as an opportunity to be an example to children. "I'd love to encourage them to think about math and science as a potential for a career and that it's a lot of fun. You can do great things for our industry and just have the time of your life, like I am.

"It just gives me goose bumps to go through this process because it's part of the legacy. It would be such a great honor to do this for a year and be an example for my girls. They're 4- and 2-years-old and hopefully they'll be proud of me when they get older and

really understand the reasons mommy went through the program and wanted to be part of its heritage."

ANNOUNCEMENT DAY: MEET THE TEAM

When Meg Crofton announced the names of Clay Shoemaker and Vanessa Rosas as the 38th Walt Disney World Ambassador Team in October, both said the moment didn't seem real.

"When I heard my name, I needed verification that it had happened and that I had heard right," said Shoemaker. "Then it just felt like a dream. I'm coming off being a manager of the Magic Kingdom Dream Squad, and this feels like one of those magical moments we always celebrate."

Echoed Rosas, "I'm super excited! I want to jump and I want to hug everybody and I can't wait to start my role." She didn't have long to wait.

GETTING READY TO TAKE THE REINS IN 2009

After facing a slew of media cameras right after the announcement, the two new "ambassadors elect" were taken away to start preparing for their new roles, including being measured for their new costumes.

"We are considered to be costumed cast members," explained Newman. "And our fantastic staff over at Creative Costuming outfits us for the year." These range from a casual look of pressed



2009 finalists await the announcement.



2009 Ambassador Vanessa Rosas

khakis and buttoned up shirts to the more typically seen business suits in the Ambassador colors of bright red or royal blue. In all, they have about six to eight different costumes for the year.

A strenuous two-month training process then kicks off to ensure that they're ready come Jan. 1. First, they head to Disneyland for a week of training with the other Disney ambassador teams from around the world. Then, all global ambassadors come back to Orlando for another week. The new Walt Disney Ambassadors will then receive sessions on everything from international etiquette training to how to stay poised at all times, as well as individual coaching

in areas that need extra work.

"After that happens, they get to follow us and shadow our experiences," said current ambassador Newman. "Kerri and I get to be like the mama ducks and they get to be our ducklings, following us around. And then at the first of the year, we'll kick them out of the nest and it'll be their turn."

And when they say Jan. 1, that's what they mean. "On the first day that the new team takes their position, they need to be ready to go and prepared for anything – including the possibility of an event at 12:01 a.m.," said Sola. "Those types of things happen all the time."

LOOKING AHEAD

Current Ambassador Kerri MacPherson said she's a little sad that her year is coming to an end. "You know, it took me two tries at going through the process and it's such a fun role. So it's absolutely bittersweet to go back to sort of a normal life. I'm just proud that we get to join the ranks of amazing former ambassadors, and that we are now part of the family and will forever be. That is just an honor in and of itself."

Fellow Ambassador Newman also used the term bittersweet as she looked back at her year. "This role is one of service to our cast members and to



2009 Ambassador Clay Shoemaker

the community at large. And it's an opportunity for us to say thank you to the cast members who keep Walt's vision alive and to the community who supports the Walt Disney Company. We are average cast members who love our company. And we get one year to show the world how fantastic it is to work for Walt Disney World."

Shoemaker is excited for his upcoming year and to take his place as one of the next Ambassadors. "This was my third time through the process. My wife, my family, and my fellow cast members have all been very supportive and encouraging. And now, I'm just ready to get started!"



All About FAMILY VACATIONS

We offer Personalized Friendly Service

To Plan Your Perfect Disney World Vacation, Cruise or other package, call for details today **1-866-896-9939**. We specialize in Walt Disney World Packages, Disneyland Resort Packages, Disney Cruise Line, Adventures by Disney, as well as other off property destinations.

Disney pictures, logos, artwork are property of (c)Disney.



www.AllAboutFamilyVacations.com

(866)896-9939



AN OLD AND NEW DINING EXPERIENCE at T-REX

Written By Mike Reilley
Photos by Matt Roseboom



When did you experience your most recent meteorite storm? When did you last walk through an ice cave? You say it's been a while since the kids dug for the bones of a dinosaur?

Well, at a time when you might have thought a really fresh, new and exciting idea in dining was a thing of the past, the T-Rex Cafe lands at Downtown Disney. But as exciting as the "wow" factor is at T-Rex, the best part may be the food.

When you first arrive, don't let the 125-foot-long skeletal argentinasauros replica scare you as you enter what is being billed as, "a prehistoric family adventure: a place to eat, shop, explore and discover." But once you are (safely) inside, the world as you know it will seem to have slipped way back in time.

T-Rex is a world of dinosaurs, the ice age, hundreds of beautiful

fish, colorful waterfalls and even the resurrection of the woolly mammoth. In all, the restaurant has 23 life-sized animatronic prehistoric creatures, including tyrannosaurus rex (of course), stegosaurus, triceratops, pachycephalosaurus and more.

Upon entering the restaurant, once you make your way past the two giant lifelike t-rex animatronics, you can't miss the colorful Shark Bar to your left with its 5,000-gallon saltwater shark tank. Another eye catcher is the Ice Cave, home to the woolly mammoth and her three offspring, who reside among walls made of glowing faux-ice. There's also plenty to see in the Fern Forest, the Sequoia Room and the other interesting and unique areas throughout the spacious eatery. Even the bathrooms have something special to offer: real fossils hang on the walls.

T-Rex is a 600-seat 30,000-square-foot interactive prehistoric destination where you can dine and learn. The

concept is the result of three companies: Landry's Restaurants, Schussler Creative and of course, Disney.

Kevin Lansberry is the vice president of Downtown Disney and he's very excited about this new destination, which is described as being built around water, fire and ice.

"I've been with Disney for about 13 years and I cannot think of a project with more anticipation than the opening of the door of T-Rex. Steve Schussler [Schussler Creative] and the Landry's team have developed a great new creative concept here that's going to thrill and wow our guests," said Lansberry. "The Rainforest Café has been doing that for the past 10 years and this concept takes it one step further. It's the next generation."

Lansberry added that the new T-Rex turned out even better than he had imagined. "I didn't expect anything quite this grand, but it is really fantastic. It's great that the kids

are going to be able to learn as well as eat healthy food, comfort food; there's a little bit of everything here. But they can really learn about dinosaurs, artifacts and fossils. The kids can even dig-up fossils in the boneyard. It's really going to be a lot of fun for families. T-Rex will definitely be a shining star for us."

While Lansberry believes the amount of attention to detail associated with the construction of T-Rex is "over the top," Steve Schussler, the brainchild of the T-Rex Café and founder of Schussler Creative out of Golden Valley, Minn., said it is all about one thing ...

"Passion! Because we are passionate about education and passionate about entertainment," he said. "There's literally something for everybody here, young and old. Even when you go into our bathrooms here you'll find tens of thousands of dollars worth of fossils on the walls. Why would we spend that kind of money to buy these fossils that are tens of millions of years old? Because we like to educate and we like to entertain."

Not that you'd become bored within the restaurant's elaborate surroundings, but to ensure you're entertained, T-Rex features special shows that begin at one-, two- and four-minute intervals, as well as the key show in the form of a meteorite shower that occurs every 20 minutes.

"Obviously, the meteorites came and destroyed the Earth and destroyed the dinosaurs," said Schussler. "So at T-Rex all the dinosaurs get upset. There's a meteorite shower and the icescape changes colors; going from blue to orange to red and it flashes, and so does our incredible ice bar. That show goes for a minute and a half and involves all the creatures and all the animals in the entire place. All the vignettes do their own show every four minutes. And every two minutes there's a sectional show, like in the ice age room, the sequoia room."



UNDER THE SEA: The Shark Bar surrounds a 5,000-gallon saltwater shark tank and features a larger-than-life moving octopus overhead.

At 60-second intervals the animated animals begin blinking, turning their heads or performing other actions designed to stimulate the children watching.

"You might hear a child say to their parents or grandparents, 'Did you see that? T-Rex just blinked at me,'" added Schussler. "There's also a constant show involving the 38-foot-in-diameter octopus. Its tentacles go up and down like a piano. Every tentacle goes up and down through the entire day. There's so much going on that if you miss something you'll catch something else and it's so carefully orchestrated, it's like a Walt Disney production."

Part of that Disney-like entertainment can be found in the restaurant's Discovery Dig Site just outside the gift shop where kids can unearth a

T-Rex themselves. It's called the Paleo Zone. Children can dig for, find and identify T-Rex bones.

Schussler calls the whole T-Rex experience edutainment. "This place is the epitome of creativity," added Schussler. "T-Rex was built with energy, compassion and devotion."

He explained how scientists now know that some dinosaurs had feathers, and so Schussler Creative took it from there.



MANEATER: What would a restaurant called T-Rex be without its namesake dinosaur?

Restaurant Report



"Because they have feathers, we have creative license to make colors like yellow and red and pink and blue," he said. "When I grew up, dinosaurs were brown, green and black; very very dark and boring."

Kids may also be amazed with Build-A-Dino inside the gift shop, where they can build and take home their own personal dinosaur. This feature is the result of the minds behind T-Rex working hand-in-hand with the people who brought us Build-A-Bear Workshop.

Build-A-Bear Workshop founder and "Chief Executive Bear" Maxine Clark was thrilled with the joining of the two. "We have enjoyed the creation of this new concept (Build-A-Dino) and working with Schussler Creative and Landry's Restaurants. It has been a great partnership," said Clark.

In explaining the partnerships, Schussler calls himself the "proud papa" of the T-Rex Café. "Landry's is my partner, not only providing some of the financing, but they're also our operators, taking care of daily operations," said Schussler. "And with Disney giving us the opportunity to open this restaurant

up, I feel like I've won the trifecta."

At the T-Rex grand opening ceremonies (Oct. 14), Schussler spoke of Walt Disney.

"Walt, I know you're up there watching over us. I want to say I feel like the luckiest man in the world," said Schussler. "This wasn't a year of construction, it was 10 years of dreaming, planning and creating."

"To be at Walt Disney World and to be given the opportunity to create magic is a very special thing," Schussler added.

This is the second T-Rex café, the first being a much smaller, yet very similar one in Kansas City, Kan. It's interesting to note that Walt Disney and his sister attended grammar school near there. Additionally, it was also noted that some of the earliest dinosaur bones have been found in the Kansas City area.

But as Schussler and others will tell you, the "great" in the T-Rex Café doesn't stop at dinosaurs and prehistoric times. It is, after all, a restaurant and they are so very proud of their menu.

You'll find plenty of interesting items on the T-Rex menu with prehistoric names such as the Ceasarsaurus Salad



CUTE DINOS: Build-A-Dino allows Cretaceous customization of plush creations.

(Caesar salad). You might enjoy the Layers of Earth Lasagna or the Mammoth Mushroom Ravioli. If you'd just like a sandwich there's plenty from which to choose. You might enjoy the Stegosaurus Steak & Cheese or the Prehistoric Panini. Dinner entrees include the

BRRRR: A woolly mammoth family graces the Ice Cave entrance where guests dine among glowing color.



Raptor Ribs and the Woolly Mammoth Chicken. But if you're in the mood for your basic all-prehistoric meal, try their popular Gigantosaurus Burger, "A true carnivore's delight."

They reference the dessert menu as, "The end is near" and at that end you can find many lovely attractions, including their Ice Age Indulgence with layers of ice cream sandwiches, fudge sauce, whipped cream and Heath Bar Crunch.

There's the kid's menu with selections such as the Prehistoric Pop'n Shrimp and the Jurassic Chicken Tidbits. For dessert the kids can enjoy the Saber-tooth Sundae. Children will also enjoy the T-Rex Prehistoric Playbook they receive when they enter.

According to Landry's Keith Beitler, it was important not to serve the same food as the nearby Rainforest Cafés and Yak & Yeti, which are also operated by Landry's.

"The good thing about our menu is that we can evaluate it every 30 to 45 days," said Beitler. "Our tradition at Landry's is that we evaluate all of our menus twice a year. Our 13 corporate chefs are always looking for new fresh things. We also have two great chefs here in Orlando who run T-Rex, the Rainforest and the Yak & Yeti concepts."

The key to their success, according to Beitler, is their concentration on detail. "But you must know that we focus just as much, if not more, on the service and the food here," he said with emphasis. "Too many times someone will build a restaurant like T-Rex; you come in, you're 'wowed' by it, but the food is just mediocre to average. But we took over a year putting the T-Rex menu together. Believe me, the food is not secondary."

Beitler is very proud of what they're calling their "Kitchen of Fire," which sits open in an area where everyone can see what's going on inside.

At the grand opening, which was



FIERY GOODNESS: The "Kitchen of Fire" is not just a name – it summarizes what T-Rex guests see and feel during food preparation.



COZY COVE: T-Rex seating provides comfort around the creatures.

not unlike a Hollywood premier, Beitler acknowledged the great support Landry's received from Disney and he also recognized Schussler, whom he called a "dream maker."


"I'd like to thank Steve Schussler for his creativity to bring T-Rex to life," said Beitler. "T-Rex is proud to employ 600 of Orlando's finest and we are extremely excited about opening up this new project to be part of the Downtown Disney family."

There could be more T-Rex Cafés



DIG IN: The brachiosaurus bruschetta is no fossil – only the freshest ingredients are used.

in the future. They're hoping to build one in Reno, Nev. and there are also many inquiries apparently coming from Europe and elsewhere.

To make reservations you'll have to use your 21st century telephone and call 407-828-TREX (8739). The Café is open daily at 11 a.m. and closes Sunday to Thursday at 11 p.m. and Friday and Saturday at midnight. Entrée prices range between \$12 and \$30. The retail shop opens daily at 9:30 a.m. Their Web site is www.trexcafe.com. 



GAYLORD PALMS RESORT

*A Large Florida-Themed Resort
with Relaxing Hidden Spaces*

Written by Deborah Brauser

Photos by Deborah Brauser, Matt Roseboom, & Gaylord Palms

DRIVING UP TO THE HUGE, STATELY COMPLEX OF BUILDINGS THAT MAKE UP THE GAYLORD PALMS RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTER, guests can easily feel impressed and even a little overwhelmed. But it's nothing like the vast, awe-inspiring surprise that awaits them once they get inside.

Right in the center of the hotel, an expansive 4.5-acre atrium full of lush walkways and winding paths,

Florida themed areas and displays, restaurants and shops, stretches out under an enormous glass roof. In fact, this area is so big that Wrigley Field could fit inside it.

Johann Krieger, vice president and Gaylord's hotel manager, said they wanted to design a resort where both leisure and business guests were comfortable, while showing off the highlights of Florida in one place. "From the beginning, we wanted to provide upscale amenities in a relaxed atmosphere. And really, why can't you do both?" said Krieger. "It's a safe, comfortable feeling for our guests and their children. And it's all under one roof with retail shops, places to eat, a gym, a spa. You never

have to leave the building."

Joe Kottas of Garden City, Kansas recently stayed on property with his wife, two children, mother and sister. "Overall, it's a great hotel that's very beautiful. It looks like a huge castle from far off. And when you go inside, it's like a whole other world – a city within a building."

Situated on 63 total acres, and only five minutes from Walt Disney World, the Gaylord Palms Resort's exterior and lobbies are designed to look like a cross between a very rich, turn-of-the-century mansion and an historic old Florida seaside hotel. That Florida theme is especially pronounced under its atrium in four distinct "zones."

FOUR ATRIUM AREAS WITH A FLORIDA FLAVOR

The first zone that guests walk through is themed around the oldest settled city in America, St. Augustine, with a reproduction of its famous Spanish fort – the Castillo de San Marcos. This area features waterfalls, cave walks, a koi pond, a recreation of the famed Fountain of Youth, and a display on treasure hunting inside the Castillo. Gator Springs is located outside the Castillo with live alligators sunning themselves on heated rocks next to the waterway (below).

The star of the Key West area is the 60-foot S.S. Gaylord sailboat (below, right), moored on the fish-filled Key West Lagoon. This ship is home to Sunset Sam's, an upscale seafood restaurant that also offers an extensive children's menu. Every night, the restaurant has a festive sunset celebration reminiscent of Mallory Square in the real Key West, with live music and a variety of performers such as fire eaters, magicians, stiltwalkers and jugglers.

The Everglades section takes full advantage of several special effects as

guests walk along wooden boardwalks that lead around waterways and "old shacks." Swamp sounds are piped in through hidden speakers, mist machines provide a moody fog in the mornings, and fiberoptic lights strung throughout the trees give the impression of fireflies at night. Of course, not everything is as it seems, as one of these deceptively looking "old shacks" is actually the upscale Old Hickory Steakhouse.

The other Everglades shack is decidedly more run down. The fun story that's been created is that it belonged to the fictional backwater Sawgrass family. And when they refused to sell their property, the resort built its hotel around the tiny family homestead. Today, the house is open for guests to walk through and showcases a few of the "family's" possessions (including an old still!), as well as a display of Florida snakes and baby alligators. And periodically, members of the Sawgrass family, as portrayed by actors, drop by to mingle with the guests in their own down-home way.

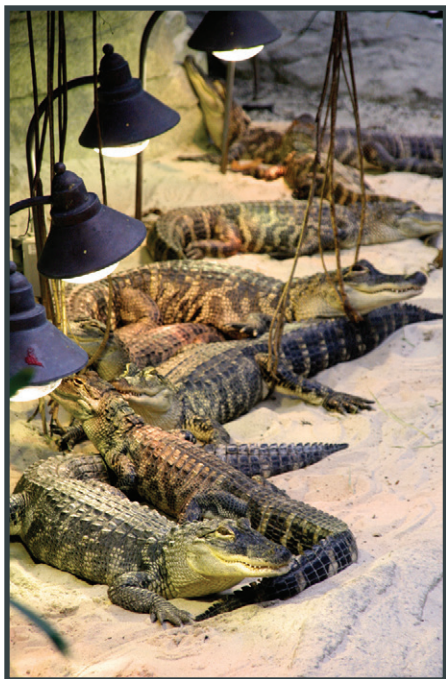
On the opposite side, is the very upscale boutique style "hotel within

a hotel" of Emerald Bay's buildings, designed to feel like those located on Florida's Emerald Coast. In addition to higher end rooms, this area also features its own meeting rooms and meeting spaces.

"There are a lot of themed hotels in the Orlando area and most are themed to other places," said Keith Salwoski, Gaylord's public relations director. "We feel that people coming to Florida want to see Florida. So we wanted our themed atriums to inspire guests to want to visit other cities and sites around the state."

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

All 1,406 guest rooms are themed to the area they surround. St. Augustine rooms have an old world feel with antique type furniture, and warm, rich colors; Key West rooms feature cabana stripes, bright colors and white-washed furniture; and rooms themed to the Everglades have palm-frond designs on the carpet and other plant-like detailing. In addition, 80 percent of the rooms have a small balcony overlooking one of the atrium areas.



BEWARE OF LIVE ANIMALS

The resort is home to many different live animals as part of their permanent exhibit, “Best of Florida Live! – Creatures and Habitats of the Sunshine State.”

- **Juvenile Alligators:** Gator Springs, next to the Castillo, houses 15 juvenile alligators. Three times a week, guests can watch feedings, listen to lectures from Gatorland wranglers and – if they’re brave enough – even

get their picture taken with a gator. These alligators will live here until they reach about three feet in length, when they’ll then be re-introduced to one of the larger animal exhibits at Gatorland.

- **Turtles:** About 30 native species of turtles share Gator Springs with the alligators. And no, they don’t seem too bothered by the living arrangements.

- **Fish:** The 161,000-gallon Key West Lagoon is full of redfish, tarpon, snook, and even small stingray. The resort

works with the Florida Division of Fish and Wildlife in caring for them.

- **Snakes:** Four species of non-venomous Florida snakes are housed in a glass exhibit inside Sawgrass Place in the Everglades.

- **Grunts:** Baby alligators, called grunts, are also on exhibit at Sawgrass Place. Once they grow too big for the exhibit, Gatorland either places them in Gator Springs or takes them to live in one of the exhibits at their park.

For pure technological pizzazz, every room in the hotel comes with a computer and Internet service, featuring the resort’s I-connect system. Guests can surf the net or take advantage of looking up restaurant menus, making reservations, ordering in-room dining, ordering a car brought up through the valet service, ordering extra towels or paying bills online. Business guests can also access information about their particular conference including seminar descriptions, meeting room layouts and directions, and even last-minute schedule changes.

All rooms also include ceiling fans,

small refrigerators with bottled water and doorbells with electronic “do not disturb” displays.

A. Santos from Honolulu, Hawaii stayed at the hotel in September with his wife and 7-year-old daughter. “Our room was large and very comfortable. And it was a nice surprise to have a computer in the room with free Internet service. I just left my laptop in the suitcase the whole time!”

AMENITIES

In addition to exploring the various atrium sections, guests can also take advantage of the many Gaylord

amenities. The Clearwater Cove Water Activity Playground is a new family area that opened last January. The old pool has been refurbished, including a new paint job for George the giant octopus. This friendly water feature creature has built-in water slides and water spouts, and looks much happier with his brighter colors compared to the rather drab concrete color he wore before. Turtles in the same bright colors now spout water next to the slides, while one very big turtle dumps water on laughing kids in the Reef, a new soft play area that includes a water curtain, misting starfish and crabs, and seahorse water cannons.

For quieter fun, the adult only South Beach pool has a peaceful, Miami-influenced vibe and an art deco style. And the Coquina Dunes Recreation Park includes an executive nine-hole putting course, bocce ball court, sand volleyball court, crochet lawn, and H2O – a poolside sports bar.

A \$15 per day resort fee covers all services, including a complimentary shuttle service to Disney or to the nearby Falcon’s Fire Golf Club.

Kids can enjoy their own vacation at the La Petite Academy Kids Station, with half- or full-day programs. Inside this secure, 4,000-square-foot room





with ocean blue walls, they can choose between the Recreation Station (with foosball, air hockey, and basketball), the Creation Station (with tables and materials for all types of craft projects), the Imagination Station (complete with a stage and karaoke machine, clothes for dressing up, and even a makeup table), and the Relaxation Station (when nothing sounds better than just curling up for a nap).

The most popular of the on-site restaurants has to be Villa de Flora, which pays tribute to the state's Mediterranean roots and offers five themed buffets on a rotating basis. This means guests can eat here several nights in a row and not have to eat the same thing. Its Sunday brunch buffet especially draws crowds from guests and locals. (By the way, tickets for self parking are validated for locals who eat at any of the restaurants.)

Other on-site amenities include the Canyon Ranch SpaClub and fitness center; SORA, the new sushi bar and lounge that opened just this year; Auggie's Jammin' Piano Bar; and shopping areas that include an ice cream parlor, a PGA Tour Shop, and even a Disney store.

STARS

Though he's proud of all the amenities and features of the resort, Krieger said it's the 1,500 employees, called Stars, who make the difference. "We realize there are a lot of great properties in town and a lot of beautiful buildings. However, we think the cornerstone of our success is our great group of Stars.

"We have a 71% retention rate, which is very high in the hospitality industry," he added. "We hire for heart. We want them to feel good about the job and the property, with a sense of home and family, and the guests can feel that. The first thing that impresses guests is the atrium environment. But the customer service and genuine care are what keeps bringing them back."

Santos said that he'll definitely be back. "It was amazing to enter the different areas of the resort to find new surprises. The pirate ship in the middle of the lagoon was a great place to enjoy a cocktail and fun for kids. And our daughter loved the water slides in the pool area, where we all played for hours. My only complaint is that we didn't stay longer!"

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES



Gaylord Palms goes all out during the holidays. In addition to its popular ICE! exhibit, it showcases a towering 54-foot Christmas tree, festive decorations including live poinsettias everywhere, a large wreath display, miles of lights strung around the property, and various entertainment options and events:

- **Brunch with Mrs. Clause at the Villa de Flora:** On Saturdays and Sundays until Dec. 21, the jolly old Mrs. visits from table to table while families dine.

- **Character Tuck-Ins:** Mrs. Claus is also on duty for special night-time visits to children. For a fee, she'll come to a family's guest room, read a story to the kids and then tuck them into bed before leaving a small gift behind. "This is really sweet and the kids love it," said Public Relations Director Keith Salwoski. "It's a great way to get the kids calmed down after a hectic day." This event is available on select dates until Dec. 24.

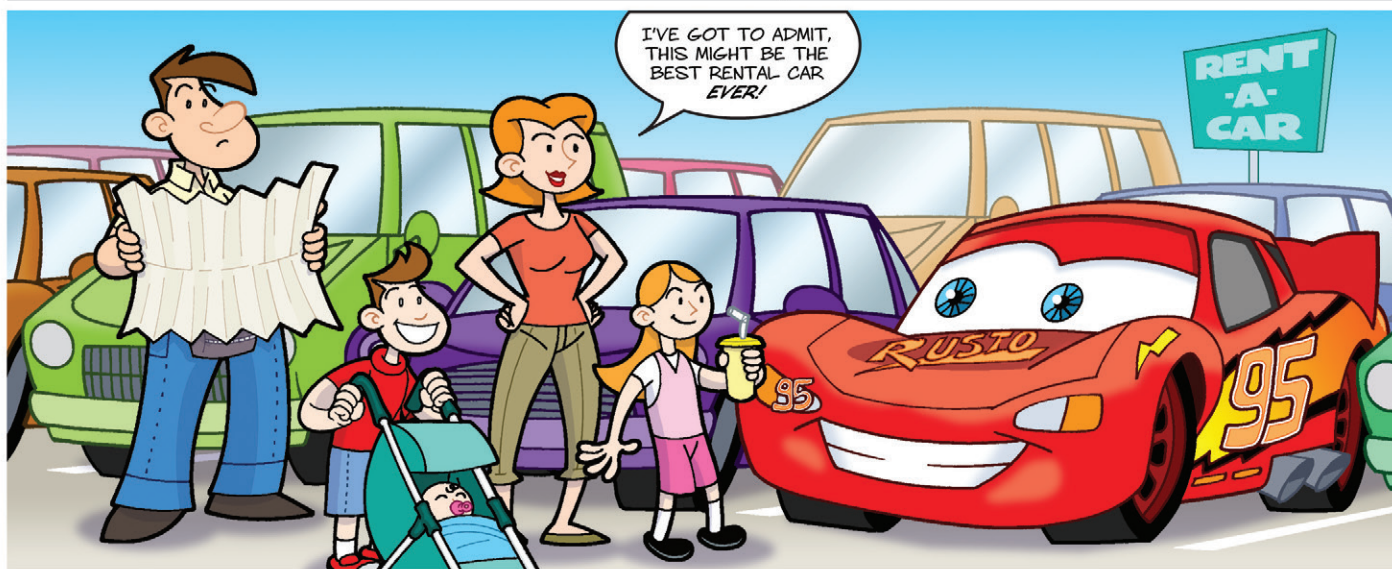
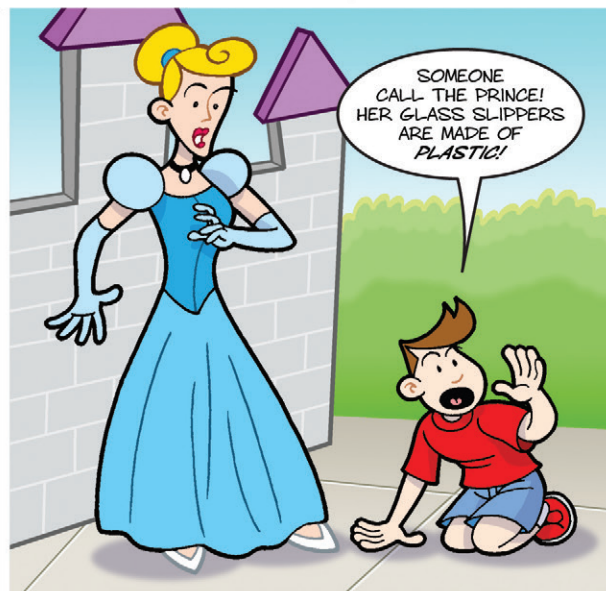
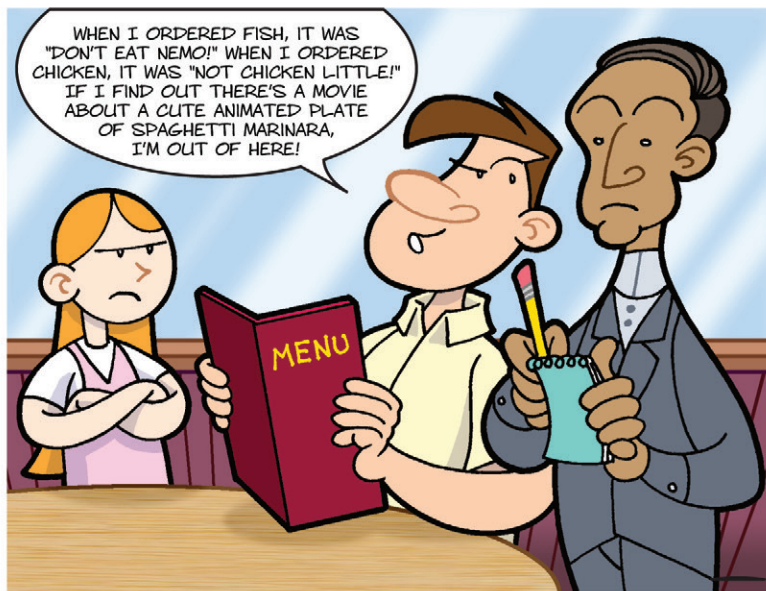
- **The Hidden Holiday Gnome Hunt:** In this popular event, back for its third straight year, guests try to decipher tricky clues to locate 10 festive gnome figurines hidden throughout the atrium. A drawing is then held from guest cards listing the correct locations, with one winner receiving a VIP Experience for two.

- **Dining During the Holidays:** The resort's two main restaurants offer extra-special dining options on Christmas Eve and Day, and New Year's Eve and Day.

For details, costs, and availability, call (407) 586-2000 or check the hotel's Web site at www.Gaylordhotels.com.

AMUSEMENT PARK

by John Green
& Pat Lewis



SPOT the DiFFeRence

The Whos of Whoville sing holiday tunes at Islands of Adventure in the Grinchmas Musical.
Can you find all 10 differences between these two pictures?



1. Purple coat has one additional star.
2. Missing wreath at top left.
3. Grinch makes special appearance at top.
4. Wreath added around Who's neck.
5. Who's bowtie color changed from green to purple.
6. Added green and white details on red dress.
7. Extra snowflakes at the bottom of the stage.
8. Presents placed on right side.
9. Extra red shell-like ornament on right.
10. "M" on door flipped upside-down.

A Taste of Winter Inside—No Matter the Forecast Outside

Icebar Orlando officially opens on International Drive.

Story by Ricky Brigante Photos by Matt Roseboom

Billed as the first and largest permanent bar made of ice in the United States, Icebar Orlando officially opened its doors on Oct. 1. The building is made up of two sections: the Chill Lounge, which occupies more than 3,000 square feet of space and can hold up to 475 guests, and the separate ice bar area.

Icebar Orlando is generally open from 5 to 11 p.m., with the Chill Lounge open from 4:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and 4:30 p.m. to midnight Sunday through Wednesday.

Entry into the Chill Lounge section of Icebar Orlando is completely free. To enjoy the actual ice bar, it costs \$35 per person which includes a Grey Goose vodka drink for guests 21 and older or a “mocktail” for guests under 21. Parking is also free and if it happens to be a Thursday, Friday or Saturday night, visitors can also enjoy some free music, courtesy of the club’s disc jockey. On select nights, the popular Icebar girls may even be present,

dancing to tunes from within a literally frosted glass enclosure.

For those interested in drinking but not interested in paying the ice bar premium, the Chill Lounge also offers a standard bar.

Up to 50 guests at a time may experience the ice room in 45-minute time slots after putting on provided thermal hooded capes and gloves. The room is kept at 27 degrees Fahrenheit, so the cape is a welcome treat to stay warm.

Nearly everything inside the ice bar is made of ice, from the furniture to the many sculptures. Even the glasses used to serve drinks are made of ice.

The entire ice bar glows brightly, changing colors every few seconds. The colors range anywhere from an eye-pleasing blue/white hue to an overwhelming bright red.

With Icebar Orlando’s opening, anyone wandering International Drive looking for somewhere to cool off can stop by and relax at no cost or make a night out of enjoying the unique ice bar attraction.



Above: The ice bar provides a chilly place to enjoy a few drinks within a unique atmosphere.

Below: Icebar’s Chill Lounge offers plenty of room to relax and converse over food and drinks.



LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTO



Congratulations to **Pamela VanAustin of Robertsedale, Ala.**, who correctly guessed last issue’s Mystery Photo location. The correct answer was Shrunken Ned’s Junior Jungle Boats, located near the entrance to the Jungle Cruise at the Magic Kingdom. Pamela will receive an *Attractions Magazine* T-shirt.

MYSTERY PHOTO

WIN A PRIZE!

Tell us where this photo was taken and you could win an **Attractions** t-shirt! E-mail your answer to mystery@attractionsmagazine.com

Hint: We’re not monkeying around when we tell you this bathtub won’t fall, but it may spill over onto someone.

The deadline for entries is January 10, 2009. One answer allowed per person, per issue. Please include your name, mailing address and telephone number with your answer. Everyone who submits the correct location will go into a drawing. One person, randomly selected from all correct entries, will win a prize. We reserve the right to publish the names of all who submit the correct location. One winner per household allowed every six months.



Attraction News from Outside the Orlando Area

By Andy Guinigundo

'Blue Sky Cellar' Previews California Adventure Expansion



Anaheim, Calif. – Disneyland guests can get an exclusive sneak peek at the upcoming planned changes to Disney's California Adventure. Guests are able to visit a mock Imagineers' creative-ideas meeting that takes "blue sky" ideas and turns them into reality. The area is full of models and sketches of what is coming soon and some of what is already in place. Images of the new Hollywood Studios-like entrance to California Adventure, to be called Buena Vista Street, are on display and a screening room reveals footage of Imagineers at work.

Transformers Coming to Universal

Universal City, Calif. – Universal Resorts will team up with toy maker Hasbro and DreamWorks Pictures as well as Transformers movie director Michael Bay and executive producer Steven Spielberg to create what is being described as a "mega-attraction". The attraction will combine 3-D with robotics and special effects. At this time, the attraction is slated for Universal Hollywood and Universal Singapore with a possible debut in 2011.

Plans to Re-Open New Orleans Theme Park Abandoned

New Orleans, La. – There has been a 10-month effort underway to re-open a

theme park at the site of the former Six Flags New Orleans. Unfortunately, despite much work by Florida-based Southern Star Amusement, the project has been abandoned. The company's Web site states they remain committed to the plan of re-opening a theme park on the Gulf Coast, although when and where are unknown.

Miley Cyrus Celebrates Sweet 16



Anaheim, Calif. – Miley Cyrus and 5,000 fans, friends and family celebrated the Hannah Montana star's 16th birthday at Disneyland in October. Cyrus arrived on a purple carpet in lieu of the traditional red carpet since purple is her favorite color. Fireworks filled the sky as the party sang happy birthday. In addition to the birthday celebration, Cyrus and Disney honored youth volunteerism. Disney CEO Bob Iger was on hand to present a \$1 million check to the Youth Service America organization. Disney also used the event to help kickoff the upcoming "What Will You Celebrate?" promotion where guests visiting a United States Disney theme park on their birthday in 2009 get in free.

Europe's First Double Helix Coaster to Close

Staffordshire, England – Alton Towers is the most visited theme park in the U.K. When the park opened in April of 1980, The Corkscrew roller coaster debuted. This November will mark the close of that classic coaster. "We are extremely proud to have hosted Europe's first double helix roller coaster," said park official Russell Barnes, "but it is now the right time to say goodbye to the attraction as we look forward to pioneering even more cutting-edge, fantastic family entertainment".

Indoor Water Park to Feature Retractable Roof

French Lick, Ind. – The Valley of the Springs resort is set to open this winter. The resort will sit on 75 wooded acres. The indoor water park will contain the usual water slides, lazy river, pools and arcade. Perhaps the "big" in Big Splash is the retractable roof. When completed it will be the largest indoor water park with a retractable roof in North America at 40,000 square feet. The park will also be completely enclosed in glass. Additional amenities will include five onsite restaurants, a conference center, and a large outdoor pool.

Dollywood Announces Adventure Mountain

Pigeon Forge, Tenn. – Dollywood has announced that 2010 will bring Adventure Mountain, a two-acre outdoor terrain attraction. The \$5-million attraction will feature three obstacle courses "to challenge the strength and skill of every member of the family". Each course caters to a different skill level and includes rope trails, net ladders, swinging bridges and moving beams up to 26 feet above the ground.

HoliWatch Announced at Holiday World

Santa Claus, Ind. – HolidayWorld theme park announced that a visitor locating system will be in place for the 2009 season. The service will be free to guests. It utilizes a waterproof radio frequency locator and messaging system in a wristband-style device. The system will give parents of little children some peace of mind while also eliminating a common park annoyance for everyone – getting separated from your party.

New Holiday Celebration at SeaWorld San Antonio

San Antonio, Texas – SeaWorld San Antonio completes its 20th anniversary festivities with the new SeaWorld Holiday Celebration. Shamu Claus will be available for pictures as will the real Santa Claus. The Polar Express 4-D Experience will play in the Sea Star Theater. Of course, the animals always take center stage at SeaWorld. Deck the Halls with Clyde and Seamore and Shamu Christmas ... Miracles will be performed throughout the season. The celebration continues until Dec. 31.



*Epcot
September 2008*



*Islands of Adventure
July 2008*

Selecting a character to meet and greet can say a lot about one's own character. Consider the case of two seemingly similar young girls – at least, similar on the outside. Both have fair skin and long blonde locks and each have come to Orlando for a fairy tale vacation. But that's where these two girls' paths diverge. Somewhere along the long stretch of highway that is life, one girl chose to take

the "princess" exit, getting dolled up for a rendezvous with Mary Poppins. The other girl decided to venture off into the "villains" rest stop, donning a darker attire in preparation for an encounter with the Green Goblin. While we can't say if either girl will follow in her idol's footsteps, living a life of good or evil, we can be sure that vacationing in Orlando has offered both experiences they will not soon forget.

Got a photo from Orlando that tells a story?

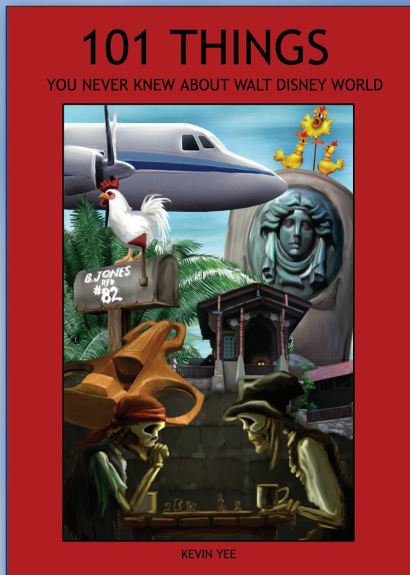
E-mail: photos@attractionsmagazine.com*

* By submitting your photographs, you automatically grant *Orlando Attractions Magazine* a royalty-free license to publish the photos and your name. You must be the photographer (or are specifically authorized to submit the photos by the photographer), and none of its elements may be from a source such as another Web site, publication, recording, film, or video. Full terms and conditions can be found at attractionsmagazine.com.

INDEPENDENT DISNEY BOOKS

BY AUTHOR KEVIN YEE

Enjoy trivia, insider tributes, and historical facts about Walt Disney World? Kevin Yee has spent twenty years working in, researching, and publishing about Disney theme parks.

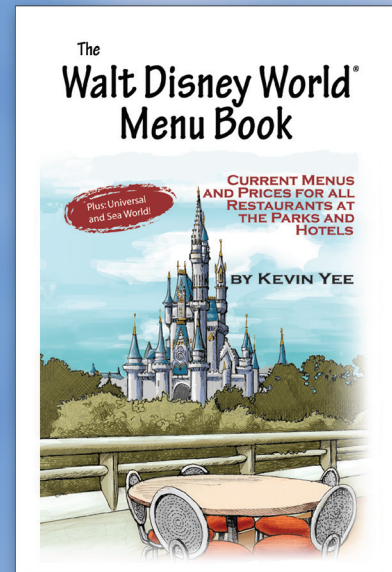


“101 Things You Never Knew About Walt Disney World” explores the many hidden tributes and references to bygone attractions that populate the theme parks. The individual 101 Things referenced by the title are all items you can actually point to at the parks, so that the book provides a kind of walking tour of the parks that yields a glimpse of the deeper history percolating below the surface.

“The Walt Disney World Menu Book” is an indispensable reference tool for vacationers in Orlando, bringing you all the menus and individual prices from restaurants around Walt Disney World, including parks, hotels, and even Downtown Disney, as well as Universal Studios and SeaWorld Orlando.

FEATURES

- Updated several times a year
- Actual dollar amounts, not approximations
- Index of menu items at each park
- Index of nearby restaurants off-property



Kevin Yee is also the author of three books about Disneyland, the most recent being *Mouse Trap*, an intimate recounting of what a decade as a front-line worker at Disneyland looks like.

*All books are available from Amazon.com or from your local bookstore.

LET YOUR IMAGINATION RUN WILD! OVER 100 INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS!

Wonder Works



- Land The Space Shuttle
- Fly A Fighter Jet
- Play Virtual Sports
- Design Your Own Roller Coaster
- PLUS MUCH MORE!



\$1.50 OFF

ADMISSION
OR COMBO
PACKAGE

PER PERSON VALID UP TO SIX PEOPLE
COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE.
NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFERS OR SPECIALS.
ONE COUPON PER TRANSACTION



012468219

FOR INFORMATION CALL 407.351.8800 • 9067 INTERNATIONAL DR. • ORLANDO, FL
www.wonderworksonline.com

THE OUTTA CONTROL MAGIC COMEDY DINNER SHOW!

INCLUDES UNLIMITED PIZZA, SALAD, BEER,
WINE, SODA, POPCORN & DESSERT!

VOTED BEST DINNER SHOW
FOR 2007 ON THE WESH2 A-LIST



ORLANDO'S FUNNIEST DINNER SHOW
LOCATED INSIDE

2
SHOWS
NIGHTLY



6:00 PM
8:00 PM

\$1.50 OFF

ADMISSION
OR COMBO
PACKAGE

PER PERSON VALID UP TO SIX PEOPLE
COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE.
NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFERS OR SPECIALS.
ONE COUPON PER TRANSACTION



012465618

RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED: CALL 407-351-8800 • 9067 INTERNATIONAL DR. • ORLANDO, FL